

Studies for Personal Workers

Howard Agnew Johnston



Abridged Edition

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Prepared for

The Social Service Committee of the
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

1904

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STUDIES FOR
PERSONAL WORKERS

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Studies for

Personal Workers

By

HOWARD AGNEW JOHNSTON

NEW YORK

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Young Men's Christian Associations
1905

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Prefatory Note

These STUDIES attempt a general survey of the subject of personal work on the part of the Christian believer. They discuss the principal features of the subject, and seek to answer many questions which arise in the various experiences which are most common in the attempt to win men to Christ. The leader may wish to supplement the suggestions offered, but he will find here a sufficient basis for the Study.

The STUDIES are arranged with a view to a weekly meeting of a Class of Personal Workers. For six days of the week there is a page a day to be considered. "Suggestions for the Class" given the seventh day are not only for the purpose of giving direction to the discussions in the class, where the review of the six days' reading will take place, but also to assist the individual reader in seizing upon the salient points in each day's lesson. Thus each day, by turning to these "suggestions" at the end of the STUDY, he will find assistance in this particular.

In the Class the attempt should be made to discuss the experiences of the workers, who will apply the principles involved to their own efforts to win men. Names need not be mentioned, but should be remembered in the Prayer Circle. If the friendship of the Circle should justify the confidence, the names may be given, so each one can be remembered by name each day in prayer. Moreover, others in the Class may be able to assist in winning these to Christ.

While the STUDIES are arranged for classes, many of which it is hoped will be formed, it is apparent that individuals may take them up at any time. They are sent forth with the prayerful hope that they may prove helpful to those who seek to be used of God in personal work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

HOWARD AGNEW JOHNSTON.

NEW YORK CITY, 1903.

Publishers' Note

The Complete Edition of this book consists of 161 pages, and contains twenty STUDIES, as announced on pages xi and xii of the Table of Contents.

The short biographies cover two pages of reading for each day, so that the four additional STUDIES are equivalent to seven of the preceding ones. The Complete Edition is printed upon finer paper and is sold at 40 cents in paper, and 60 cents in cloth; 45 cents and 66 cents postpaid.

This Abridged Edition is issued in answer to a desire to secure a cheaper copy of these Sixteen STUDIES, which strictly cover the subjects of motive and methods in personal work.

This edition is sold at 25 cents. Orders in quantities of one dozen or more will be sold at \$2.50 per dozen.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

3 West 29th Street, New York

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STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.

FIRST DAY: *A Child of God—Needs a Father's Care.*

A strategic point of view from which to approach a study of the work of saving men is found in Luke xv. Two facts stand out: (1) That man as a child of God has forfeited his sonship and needs help; (2) that God is still his Father and ready to forgive and save him.

The most revolutionary truth Christ taught to men was that regarding the Fatherhood of God. In Christ's time no man was allowed to take the name of Jehovah on his lips. Children were taught another name to use instead. When Christ began to talk familiarly and lovingly about God as His Father the astonishment was great. When He taught His disciples to pray "Our Father" they little dreamed how potent these two words would be in the uplifting of the race. (Matt. vi. 9 sq.) They first thought of God as Christ's Father. That was a momentous day when Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.) They could realize the Fatherhood of God for Christ, because they saw the Sonship of God in Christ. And then He led them to see how they might come back into the Sonship. Luke xv. was a marvellous picture to them. Could such a Father's love be theirs? How well they knew what the wayward son thought of his husks! How their desires ran along the line of his purpose to "arise and go" to his father! As Christ gave them a vision of the love of God our Father in heaven, a new hope, a new joy, a new faith bathed their needy souls with a strange new longing which was almost a responsive love for God, because He loved them thus.

Prayer.—I am Thy wayward child, O God my Father! Quicken in me a sense of my need of Thee. Give me a vision of Thy forgiving love, and constrain me to seek Thy presence evermore. Amen.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.**SECOND DAY: *Lost—Needs a Guide.***

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36, 37.) It is the searching question of questions for every man. Various ideas centre about the expression, "a lost soul." Some of these are arbitrary. But there is nothing arbitrary about realities, because they are in the nature of things. When a child is lost, it just means one thing: he does not know his way. He needs just one thing: a guide. Just so is it with every man who does not know God. But the way to know God is to know Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Much as the disciples of Christ longed to know the Father, they made slow progress because they could not grasp the truth that God was manifest in Christ. (John xiv. 1-11.) The pathos of human history is in this dulness of man's heart. Paul explains it in Romans i. 21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

This need of the lost world is written in blood and tears on every page of history. It is the echo of man's despair because he is without hope and without God in the world. The cry of the heart is with Job, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" (xxiii. 3.) Christ answers: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John xiv. 6.) Every lost man needs Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

Prayer.—

" An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light."

Thus I cry to Thee, O God of light and life. Shine in my heart to give me the knowledge of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.**THIRD DAY: *Sin-sick—Needs a Physician.***

Salvation is health. Sin is disease. The words *heal* and *whole* and *holy* are all the same word. Christ came to seek and to save the lost, and part of His method was to heal them of disease. "They that be whole need not a physician," He said. (Matt. ix. 12.) But men needed a Saviour because they were not whole, and need Him now for the same reason. The principle of sin must be studied in the light of this fundamental fact. Disease is due to any transgression of, or lack of conformity unto the law of health. To neglect the law is as fatal as to violate it wilfully. Sin results from any transgression of, or lack of conformity unto the law of righteousness, which is the law of holiness, or wholeness, or health. We think of disease as applying to the physical man, and sin as applying to the spiritual man; but the whole man is involved in wholeness.

Note well here the difference between sin and guilt. Sin is the general condition. Guilt marks the crime of violating wilfully some particular law. Many who are not directly guilty of sin must suffer because of the sin of others, as in the case of the wife and children of a drunkard. Just so, every human being is born into sin, the sin of the race, deepening and deadening through the centuries. Man's first problem is not that of guilt, but it is that of sin. Many fail to realize their need to be saved from sin because they are not overwhelmed with a sense of guilt. Their sin is no less fatal. The failure to realize this need explains the stagnation and death which mark millions of the human race to-day. Again we note the pathos of human history here. The fatality of neglect is everywhere apparent to thoughtful men. (Ps. xxxii. 1-8.)

Prayer.—Divine Saviour, give me a vivid sense of my sin, and awaken in me some appreciation of my helplessness and hopelessness without Thy saving help.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.**FOURTH DAY: Slave to Sin—Needs a Redeemer.**

What havoc sin has wrought! To be lost and sin-sick is not all. Sin is a hard and relentless master. The most pitiful object in this world is a man who has become a slave to sin, betraying his helplessness, as his struggle grows weaker and his will becomes flabby, while the strength of his character disappears. He may be considered a social lion; he may have all that gold can give; he may even shine with intellectual brilliancy; but he knows too well that he is a slave to sin. And he knows in his inmost heart that he is utterly helpless to save himself, to realize spiritual health, purity of heart, righteousness of character in the sight of God. (Rom. i. 20-32; John iii. 17.)

If such a man should have all else this world can give, the more pitiful is his case. He is a slave to sin, and he can never be free unless he shall find help outside of himself. The poet has pictured him

“As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
And then, retiring, left it there to rot
And moulder in the winds and rains of heaven,
So he, cut from the sympathies of life,
And cast ashore from pleasure’s boisterous surge,
A wandering, weary, worn and wretched thing,
A scorched and desolate and blasted soul,
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought,
Reined and groaned and withered from the earth.”

“The wages of sin is death.” When disease only reaches the body, then the soul that is healed is set free; but when disease claims both body and soul there is hopeless slavery.

Prayer.—Blessed Redeemer, Thou hast paid my ransom. My only hope is in Thee.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.

FIFTH DAY: *Tempted—Needs a Helper.*

Even when the lost has found a guide, and the diseased has accepted a physician, and the slave has rejoiced in a redeemer, still the need of man continues. He has still three persistent foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Even when a man has given the allegiance of his life to Christ, and begins to live “by the faith of the Son of God,” he cannot break with the old life quickly and completely. The “old man” does not give way thus easily to the “new man.” The regenerating power of God has implanted a new life principle in the soul, but the whole life is transformed slowly into the likeness of Christ. The nature of the Kingdom is described by Christ in Mark iv. 26-28. There are thorns to clear away, and the enemy soweth tares; hence the harvest is delayed. The man still needs a helper. He is never sufficient unto himself.

Christ emphasizes this truth helpfully in John xv. 1-11. Fruit is only possible while the branch is in the vine. Health only comes to the man who obeys his physician in matters of food and medicine and exercise. Temptation in its largest significance is testing. Resistant forces are always to be reckoned with. If men did not need to struggle in order to obtain bread the race would quickly degenerate, and character would be lost in a lazy animal. Struggle is the blessed condition of strength. Temptation is the test of fidelity. Dirt must be washed away if we would be clean. Error must be dispelled if truth shall win. Sin must be conquered if righteousness shall crown the life.

Prayer.—O Christ, Thou hast won this victory. I need Thy conquering help in order that I, too, may conquer. Keep me from the fatality of neglect, that forgets my need of Thee, and bind me close to Thy side, that sin may no longer have dominion over me.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.

SIXTH DAY: *A Servant—Needs a Master.*

Every man is a servant. Every life is a service. The Christian, therefore, does not cease to be a servant. He only changes masters. Life is no longer negative, simply a struggle to overcome sin. It is henceforth positive, to be a growth in righteousness, to be a service for God and men. It is to achieve mastery over self and ministry for others. But here also the Christian needs a master. Paul states the case clearly in Philippians iii. 12. This verb "apprehend" means to lay hold upon, and Paul says he is trying to lay hold upon that for which Christ laid hold upon him. Now the noun of this verb is the word *apprentice*, and what Paul has really said is that the Christian is an apprentice, with Christ for his Master. Read Philippians iii. 7-14.

Mark the force of this striking statement. A young man contemplating an apprenticeship does not hesitate to begin because of conscious weakness, or ignorance, or the fear of making mistakes. The liability to all this only emphasizes his need to begin at once his discipline. Moreover, he is encouraged to do this because his hope is in his master, and only in himself as he shall give himself entirely to his master's guidance. He trusts the master to correct every fault, and thus he trusts to become masterful one glad day. In this spirit he achieves his best and his most. (Phil. iv. 13.)

Here is the picture of a Christian life. It is a great work which the follower of Christ must attempt. Only as he realizes his constant need of Christ as his Master, through all of his apprenticeship, will it be possible for him to become strong and masterful and helpful.

Prayer.—Forbid that mine should be a fruitless life, O Lord! My resources are in Thee. Be Thou my Master in all things. May I not shrink from Thy discipline.

STUDY I—Man's Personal Needs.**SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.***

This Study demands an earnest examination of self. The only way for me to realize every man's needs is to realize my own. An intelligent diagnosis of disease is necessary before there can be an intelligent prescription. Every personal worker must be master of the truth regarding the needs of men. (John xvi. 8.) To this end let an analysis be made of each day's reading.

1. What is Christ's purpose in teaching the parable of Luke xv.? What was the general idea of God in Christ's time? How did His followers come to the appreciation of the Fatherhood of God? What did this truth mean to them? What does it mean to you?

2. How would you describe a lost soul? What is Paul's philosophy of the lost condition of men? How would you show a man the reality of his need of Christ because he is lost?

3. What words in this reading involve the very nature of things? How would you distinguish between sin and guilt? Do you realize your helplessness because of your sin?

4. What would you say constitutes slavery to sin? Why is the case of the man with many advantages the more pitiful if he be a slave to sin? How far does sin work death?

5. How much is involved in the largest application of the term temptation? Why is a Christian not free from temptation? What blessing comes from struggle with resistant forces?

6. Explain how the philosophy of the Christian life is set forth in the experience of an apprentice. For each of the six points of view here considered sum up man's need of Christ. Has this Study deepened your own sense of this need? If not, why not?

Prayer.—Out of my needs I cry to Thee, O Christ! Supply all my needs every day. May I learn how to help men to see their need of Thee.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.**FIRST DAY: *God's Valuation of a Soul.***

The value of a lost soul makes the shipwreck so terrible. Heaven's measure of this value explains the joy which Christ thrice describes in Luke xv. The utter lack of appreciation of this value explains the grudging murmur of the elder brother when the lost one is found and saved. Alas! that so few Christians, though they themselves have tasted of Christ's salvation, have entered into God's valuation of a living soul! Were this done the Gospel would be given to the world in a generation. Christ startles men with the question which lifts the soul above all things earthly to the very level of fellowship with God. (Mark viii. 36, 37.) The whole world of material riches sinks down below the spiritual worth of one immortal soul.

We touch the heart of all spiritual life and values by realizing that worship is worth-ship. The key-note of heaven's song is "worthy" is the Lamb. There is His intrinsic worth, His beauty of holiness, compelling adoration. But how much it is worth to us because He counted it worth while to live and die for our salvation only heaven can tell. He counted the cost and came to pay the price because He realized that it would pay. Nay, we must believe that God counted the cost of allowing the sin and sorrow and suffering of the ages of human history because He saw that out of the discipline the product would be a redeemed life for the immortal souls that had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 13, 14.) When we consider the millions of lost, barren, empty, blighted lives it is wellnigh incredible that so many followers of Jesus Christ spend their days in complacent indifference to God's valuation of a human life.

Prayer.—Inspire my life anew, eternal Father of my spirit, with the sense of the dignity with which Thou hast crowned my being.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.**SECOND DAY: *God's Sympathy for Men.***

The most important truth for us to know is that God is concerned about men. God cares for us. Christ's revelation of the Father's love breathes this teaching continually. (Matt. vi. 25-33.) Once appreciate intelligently the value of a human life and this divine concern is necessarily recognized. The only philosophy of life which will ever satisfy a thinking man must teach that God enters into all human suffering, just as an earthly father enters into the discipline of his children. The great key-word of the Gospel record of the life of Christ is the word *Compassion*. It is sympathy at its deepest. It means "suffering with." Three times we have the word in the Gospels. First, in Mark viii. 2, where Christ said He had "compassion on the multitude," for they were as sheep having no shepherd. The second instance is in Luke x. 33, where He explains the conduct of the Good Samaritan by the use of this word. Then in Luke xv. 20, where the father's love for his penitent son is revealed in this same spirit of compassion.

Ponder these three utterances in their context. Study the spirit of Christ that throbs in them, and realize that this is the picture of the love of God which is given to men. This is the "dying love" of Jesus Christ. Dr. George Adam Smith says truly: "The divine essence of the Bible consists in this—the marvellous story, how it tells us that this moral warfare of ours is shared by God Himself, that the divine nature descended into that warfare, that it bears the agony of strife, nay, the shame and curse of it!—all for man's salvation. . . . That is why the Bible will always be the indispensable force to man's salvation."

Prayer.—Let not sorrow and suffering blind my heart to Thy love, O my Father! But may that love be so real to me that in every trial I shall have the light of hope shining clear, bringing comfort and peace.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.**THIRD DAY: God's Plan for Men.**

It has always been the same from the beginning. In Genesis i. 26 we read the purpose of God in the creation of man in the divine image. And when that image became blurred by sin the plan persisted through all the years, as we find in the words of Paul in Romans viii. 29, where he tells us God's destiny for man is that he might "be conformed to the image of His Son." To realize this plan all the work of redemption was inaugurated and carried through to the cross of Calvary, and continues now by the exalted Christ in the great intercessory work of heaven in behalf of men. Paul sees God's plan working out its fruitage, as he exclaims in 2 Corinthians iii. 18: "We all with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

To realize this plan man would always have needed God, even if sin had not entered. But with sin's entrance the work of God becomes the providing of a salvation for men. This is necessary to meet the need, and the plan of God for men is revealed in its motive and spirit by Christ's words in John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Divine sympathy must at once reveal a way to help the suffering children of His love. Christ voiced the constraint upon the divine love in His utterance to the two companions on the way to Emmaus: "*Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26.) But His glory is His accomplished redemption, in the realization of God's plan for men.

Prayer.—"None of the ransomed ever knew how dark was the night which the Lord passed through ere He found the sheep that was lost!" O divine Shepherd, help me to see how Thy coming reveals God's love, to the end that God's purpose may be realized in me.

STUDIES FOR PERSONAL WORKERS II

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.

FOURTH DAY: *God's Gift of Light.*

The light was shining at the beginning. It was shining in the law. It was the love in the law. Every law is a good law, and brings only blessings when it is obeyed. Speaking broadly, every law is a law of health—that is, a law of wholeness. When one sins against the light of this law the inevitable result is failure of wholeness, or holiness—that is, some form of the disease of sin. But the light shines on. Its lustre is even increased when it is shining in a broken law, because its teaching is even plainer than before. But light cannot avail except there be eyes to see, and when the heart is darkened (Rom. i. 21) then the condition described by Christ in Matthew vi. 23 follows. This again is the pathos of human history. But the light never ceased shining.

God was waiting for a man who would open his eyes to the light. A few men here and there saw its gleaming, and turned to walk in its pathway. Abraham loved light, and God gave him a vision. Through him the people came who only saw the value of the spiritual life and strove toward God's plan for men. Then Moses saw a burning bush aflame with God. (Ex. iii. 1-6.) Therefore to him, and to every man who would take it, God gave all the light He could. And yet men could not see the full shining of God's light. The lack was in men. They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John iii. 19.) Man's need of more light continued unsatisfied, not because the light was not shining, but because men had lost the vision, and no one could give them the truth in its fulness and glory. Still the light was always shining.

Prayer.—O Thou who art light, and in Whom there is no darkness at all, open my blind eyes that I may see the shining of Thy love, and the glory of Thy life, and the beauty of Thy holiness, and the joy of Thy salvation.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.**FIFTH DAY: *God's Gift of Christ.***

Since no man could catch the vision, the Son of God came, saying, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God. (Heb. x. 7.) John describes His coming in the Gospel, i. 1-14. Mark that closing expression: "We beheld His glory—full of grace and truth." We have that word "full" now for the first time. Paul tells us, in 2 Corinthians iv. 6, how "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It was necessary for the word to become flesh. Every word must become flesh before it can reveal its power to men. Just in so far as the word becomes flesh in your life, you know its reality and blessing. Christ's incarnation was necessary to the revelation of the truth, as well as for the work of redemption.

Thus the plan of God's love (John iii. 16) worked on in the process of redemption. Christ is the Guide to the lost. Christ is the Physician to the sin-sick. Christ is the Redeemer from the slavery of sin. Christ is the Helper of the tempted. Christ is the Master of the Christian apprentice. And in all His work He reveals the heavenly Father's love to His neglectful children. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. v. 19.) It is God's personal work for men. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.) Put over against the picture of human need presented in the previous Study this fact of God's provision for all those needs, even to the gift of eternal life, and who can refrain from the exulting, jubilant exclamation of Paul, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" (2 Cor. ix. 15.) For, in giving us Christ, God hath given us all things that we need richly to enjoy.

Prayer.—Help me to receive Thee, O Christ! That I may have power to become a son of God. Enable me to lay hold upon eternal life, whereunto I am also called, as I fight the good fight of faith in Thee, my Saviour and my Lord.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.**SIXTH DAY: *God's Gift of the Holy Spirit.***

The Word must be made flesh and dwell among us, but the flesh is temporal and local. God's plan is for all men and for all time. Therefore a local Christ would not suffice. He accomplished the work which His Father gave Him to do, and then He returned "up where He was before." (John vi. 62.) But having promised His disciples that the Comforter would come, even the Spirit of truth, to abide with His people forever (John xiv. 16), He commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem until this promise should be fulfilled. They waited and prayed and wondered. Finally the day of manifestation came. The marvellous power of God rested upon them.

Note well the meaning of this experience to the disciples. Peter, in his sermon, reviews the history of Christ up to the moment of His being glorified, and then adds: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, *He* hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) He, the living Christ, had done it. He still lived to them. He gave them power now to go forth as His witnesses. In this faith they went. How realistic is His presence with Peter as he exclaims to the paralytic: *Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.* (Acts ix. 34.) This is the work of the Spirit, to glorify Christ, to take the things of Christ and make them plain. (John xvi. 13, 14.) Thus by the truth He sanctifies believers, and the fruit of His indwelling and inworking is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. v. 22, 23.) That is to say, the redeemed man takes on likeness to Christ, and the transforming into His image progresses, as men can say with Paul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

Prayer.—O God, my Father, I ask Thee now for this gift. Prepare me to receive Him, and to be led by Him until Thou canst use me fully.

STUDY II—God's Personal Work for Men.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

Many queries will arise in inquiring minds which will be answered by this Study. Personal workers should be well furnished with the facts which set forth God's part in the work of man's salvation.

1. What teaching of Christ can you mention to show how much God values an immortal soul? How does worship involve values? What appreciation of the value of human lives do Christians ordinarily show? Has this reading increased your concern for men?

2. What facts compel the conviction that God is full of compassion for lost and needy men? What three instances are mentioned where Christ illumined that word? Why do not Christians have more compassion for men?

3. What is God's plan for men? Did God have a sense of duty in planning for man's salvation? Has your ambition fixed your destiny in the fellowship of God through Christ?

4. How did God's light appear to men from the beginning? Why did not men receive it? Who saw it among the patriarchs? Who saw it among the heathen? (Answer from general knowledge.)

5. Why was Christ's incarnation necessary? How was the light fully revealed in Him? Have you personally attempted to realize how much Christ is worth to you?

6. Why was the Holy Spirit needed? What did the outpouring of the Holy Spirit signify to the disciples? What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Repeat Paul's statement regarding the fruits of the Spirit.

Prayer.—

Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught with-hold, dear Lord from Thee :
Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee,
That each departing day henceforth may see
Some work of love begun, some deed of kindness done,
Some wanderer sought and won, something for Thee.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.**FIRST DAY: *The One Way to Reach Men.***

Since the light can only accomplish its work when men see, and since the Word must become flesh in order to become "the light of life," therefore those who have the light must give it to those who have it not by living it among their fellows until it reveals the love of Christ. God's revelation of life must be a character. Hence Christ. But that revelation must always continue to be a life. Hence Christians. Christ said, "I am the Light of the world" (John ix. 5), and then said to His followers, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 14-16), "Ye are My witnesses." Hence the force of the apostle's description of Christians as "living" epistles, known and read of all men. (2 Cor. iii. 2.) The consistent life authenticates the faithful testimony. Men must know in order to believe.

This is the point of Paul's argument in Romans x. 8-15, for the necessity which rests upon men to give the Gospel of salvation to those who are in the darkness. There is no other way to reach men. No other method could have the advantages of this one, both in its effect upon the witnesses and upon those receiving the message. Every man who receives Christ becomes a trustee for other men to give Christ to them. He receives Christ not for himself alone, but to share with every other man. In the business world a trustee has a keen sense of honor regarding the faithful discharge of his trust. When will the Christian have the same high sense of honor regarding his trust? Until we have it the world will still struggle but slowly out of the darkness into the light, out of the slavery of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Prayer.—Help me to realize that I am debtor to every man, because Thou hast tasted death for him, that he might receive Thy gift of eternal life. Help me to be honest in the effort to discharge my trust.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.**SECOND DAY: *The Crime of Unconcern.***

At the beginning of human relations we find this indifference about the lives of our fellow-men. (Gen. iv. 3-14.) But Cain was his brother's keeper, and could not evade his responsibility in the sight of God. This unconcern is everywhere. There is an annual gain of only seven per cent. to the Church of Christ in America. Think of it! Only seven for every hundred in a year! What must that mean of many who do nothing to win a single soul through months and years of a nominal Christian life!

Some years ago a well-known Christian was stopped on the street by a friend with the question: "Mr. R., how long have we known each other?" "About fifteen years," was the reply. "You claim to be a Christian." "Yes." "Well, do you believe that I must accept Christ if I am saved?" "I do." "And do you care whether or not I am saved?" "Why, certainly!" "Pardon me, I do not wish to hurt you; but I do not believe it. Through these years we have discussed all sorts of topics, yet you have never uttered one word to indicate to me that you cared about my soul. If you had cared you surely would have spoken." (Ps. cxlii. 4.)

How many Christians could thus be charged with a like failure! Think of Christian work in China for a moment. Suppose a new convert to Christianity in China never spoke to a friend about Christ, never did any positive witnessing for Christ, would we not begin to question the quality of his Christianity? But how can we fail to demand as much of ourselves in Christian America? If out of the darkness of China we expect a man to show his colors promptly and loyally, surely this test condemns us in our failure and leaves us without excuse.

Prayer.—O Christ, whose compassion for men led Thee to give Thy life for me, help me to deny myself, and so to learn Thy constraining love that I may live unto Thee and for the sake of men.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.

THIRD DAY: *Winning Men the Supreme Duty of Christians.*

Every Christian should make Ezekiel xxxiii. 1-9 a personal message from God. In the light of our previous Study it becomes apparent that when the interests of the soul are ignored life is a failure. Let us think of this from another point of view. We call anything a success according as it accomplishes that which its form of construction shows its maker intended it to be and do. For instance, it is evident from its form of construction that an umbrella is intended to keep off the rain. It may serve various purposes, but if it will not keep off the rain it is a failure as an umbrella. Just so the human soul shows that God intended man to be something more than a tailor's model, something more than a splendid athlete, something more than a social success, something more than a millionaire, something more than a philosopher or poet. If one were to realize all this, but only this, not reaching up to the spiritual life, to the making of character, to the fellowship with God; then across the record of his life must be written the verdict—He is a failure as an immortal soul!

Therefore the supreme duty for me is, first, to realize my own salvation through Christ, and then to see that nothing, nothing can for a moment be compared to the life which seeks to win immortal souls to be His followers. This is not only the supreme duty for Christians, but it is the supreme joy. Christ's joy is the joy of knowing that He has done something to save a priceless soul. Every Christian may taste that joy here and now. I must give an account of my trusteeship to God, according as I give Christ to men. No other service which I can render in life can compare with this in importance. My plain duty is here.

Prayer.—Help me to put first things first. Burden me with a sense of responsibility for men, and help me to be faithful to my trust.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.**FOURTH DAY: *Saved to Serve.***

We have noted heretofore that no man can escape service. Every man is counting for good or ill because of the kind of service to which he is giving his life. (Rom. vi. 16.) No man can live unto himself. He may die unto himself; but to live means to grow, and growth means the development of our powers. But development must be along the lines of natural relations, and since man is a social being his relations involve his fellow-men. Human life involves the play of the affections, the place for sympathy, the opportunity to help, the duty to serve. Therefore no man truly bears his own burden except as he helps others in the bearing of their burdens. (Gal. vi. 2-5.)

Now the man who takes Christ for his Saviour must also take Christ for his Master, to make Christ's purpose his purpose. But Christ's purpose is to serve. It was the law of His life on earth, and continues to be in heaven. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark x. 45.) Every man redeemed by Christ from the slavery of sin belongs in very truth to Christ. His one aim should be to do all in his power toward paying the great debt he owes to Christ. But this means to serve Christ in Christ's way, and He has made that way plain. We serve Him by denying self, as He did, and by seeking to save others, as He did. But with the true Christian this is not done simply from a sense of obligation. He has caught a vision of Christ's wonderful love, which explains Calvary, and he has learned to love the Christ-life above every other, until he cries with Paul: "The love of Christ constraineth us!" (2 Cor. v. 14-21.) Hence for him salvation does not simply mean service, for life meant some kind of service before. Salvation now means the loving service of Christ.

Prayer.—Divine Master, teach me the way to empty self. May I not shrink from the cross of self-denial, but be quick to help every man in need.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.

FIFTH DAY: *Service and Power.*

Some one has said this generation has not yet seen the man who has so completely given his life to God that God could trust him with His power. What Christian can ponder that statement without an instant prayer in his heart? For just to the extent that a man truly gives his life to God, God will give His power to that man. The law of this gift of power is written everywhere that power exists. The spirit that is ready to serve, ready to obey, is the condition. (Rom. xii. 3-6.) When this is proved to be in the heart, the power is given. Marconi's power in the realm of electricity is explained by this law. The moment he ceases to obey and serve the law, that moment the power ceases. Not only so, but it is as Marconi serves the law with all his might, making the most of every fact at hand, growing better acquainted with its power, that, lo! he catches a vision of a new application of the law, and the result is wireless telegraphy for the world! This is not strange. It is inevitable. (Job xvii. 9.)

The man of power everywhere is serving thus in his sphere of success, and his vision rises above and beyond the level on which he started. It could not be otherwise in the experience of the Christian who seeks to possess the power of God. It explains Moses and Paul and Luther and Judson and Moody. What an ambition it would be for every earnest Christian to have, so to serve God's law that God will surely give him His power! What the Church of God needs is a baptism of power; but in order to have it there must first be a baptism of the spirit of readiness to serve, to obey the law of God. God is ready, waiting for us to be willing to meet the condition. (Acts i. 4-8.)

Prayer.—

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the power of grace divine.

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.

SIXTH DAY: *The Responsibility of Example.*

Phillips Brooks was right when he said the great argument for Christianity is not a syllogism, but a man. The most helpful way for a Christian to strengthen his neighbor is by living consistently with the true ideal of a Christian life. (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) Without striving for this, his word cannot help. With it, whatever he may do doubles in value. The atheist who visited Fénelon said: "If I stay here much longer I will be a Christian in spite of myself." Henry M. Stanley testified that the beauty of holiness in the life of David Livingstone won him to Christ.

The serious fact must now be considered that every life is an argument. Every life is an example, and that example is exerting the influence which is counting for or against the cause of Christ. Many a man's life-example is arguing, "I can be a Christian simply by having my name on the Church book." Many another is arguing, "I am doing enough for the cause of Christ when I give it financial support." Still others are arguing, "We cannot reasonably be expected to suffer any inconvenience personally or socially in order to do Christian work." And men read and know these epistles, these living arguments. (2 Cor. iii. 2-6.)

Henry Drummond was right when he said: "What the cause of Christ needs is not so much more of us, as a better brand of us." Christ is being wounded more sadly in the house of His friends than by the weapons of His enemies. Here again is the pathos of Christian history! Oh, for new standards in the Church of Christ! For a burning sense of shame at our shallow, selfish religion! For an abiding purpose to live Christ so truly that all who know us will believe in our genuineness, and will give honor to our Lord because of it! (Matt. vii. 16-20.)

Prayer.—Help us to do it, O Christ! How ready are we to compromise! Help us to walk as children of the light!

STUDY III—Man's Personal Responsibility for Men.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

The serious fact about thousands of Christians is that they refuse to accept responsibility for their fellow-men. They will not deny the theory of the Christian religion, but they quietly ignore the demand which Christian responsibility involves. This truth must have its place in Christian lives before the Church will ever begin to do its God-given work for a dying race of immortal men.

1. What is the argument for the necessity which rests upon Christians to help men to know Christ? Can you think of any other way better than this? What is involved in the fact that Christ is given to us in trust?

2. What proof can you mention of the general unconcern on the part of Christians about the salvation of men? What do we expect of a new convert in China? Are you concerned about any particular individual?

3. What in your judgment makes life a success? Why? Wherein does winning men to Christ constitute our supreme duty? Are you striving to win one soul to Christ? If not, why not?

4. In what sense is every life a service? Why cannot man live unto himself? What must be the law of the Christian life? What element does his salvation put into the service of a Christian?

5. Repeat the first sentence in this day's reading from memory. Do you truly desire the power of God? What would it mean for you, if God should give His power to you? Would you be ready for anything that would glorify God? If not, ought you to pray for this power?

6. Are you deeply concerned about your example? Is there one life which you know you are influencing for evil? If so, change your life at that point instantly. What is the argument of your life, as people read you and judge of Christianity by the way you live it?

Prayer.—My God, to whom I must give an account, help me to accept my responsibility with an earnest heart and a quickened conscience.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.

FIRST DAY: *Appreciation of Need.*

A general desire to be a Christian worker is not sufficient preparation for the work. (Acts xviii. 24-28.) To succeed in any task a man must meet conditions of success, and those conditions must be clearly seen and appreciated. It is perfectly evident to many Christians that they are not fitted to attempt the task of winning individuals to Christ. Many such at once excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter. But, if they be responsible also for their lack of preparation, their condemnation is only the greater. The first and greatest need of all is the desire and purpose to serve Christ and men in this way. This may be very greatly increased, and must be cultivated by every earnest man.

Meditation upon such truth as the foregoing Studies contain will help to deepen this desire and strengthen this purpose. But going with this must be a definite training for the work if it is to be done most effectively. Christ's training of the Twelve was mainly to this end. The Church of Christ needs to cultivate this work. Every pastor should have a group of workers in training under his own or some other's leadership. Every Christian organization should have those among its numbers who are striving to be well equipped for this work. (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

Now this study should be specific and definite. Certain things are necessary to successful Christian work. To possess them involves discipline. Failure in this work is due more to a lack in the person striving to win another than in the person to be won. The athlete sets himself to a system of training, as a matter of course. He would never expect to win without it. The soldier without discipline has no reason to hope for victory. How evident then is the need of the Christian!

Prayer.—Help me to be thoroughly honest with myself, O Lord! Teach me to realize what I must be and do if I would serve Thee and my fellow-men at my best.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**SECOND DAY: *Faith—Taking God into Account.***

The tap-root of all sin is unbelief. Therefore all failure must largely be explained by a lack of faith in God. This does not mean simply the failure to look to God for help in personal work. The trouble is deeper. If we thoroughly believed God's word about the deadly character of sin there would be a very different spirit on the part of Christians everywhere. We may not deny the statement of God's word, but we really do not believe that our friends who are indifferent about their spiritual life are hopelessly separated from God. In fact we do not take God seriously into the account. We care more for the opinion of men than for the plain teaching of God's word. (Rom. xi. 30; note swiftly Heb. xi.)

Now intelligent faith is measured by the degree to which the truth believed is actually appreciated as a reality. The faith needed by every Christian worker is the profound and constraining conviction that his work is a compelling necessity because men are going the way of eternal death. This is the truth which must be preached and taught until men have a new conviction as to the sinfulness of sin.

Then the faith of the worker must be centred upon Jesus Christ. God's redeeming grace, revealed in Christ's life and death, must be thoroughly believed to be the sufficient and efficient provision of salvation for penitent and believing men. Without this faith all work must come short of the real thing. The history of Christianity is perfectly clear at this point. The faith in the redeeming work of the divine Christ is the only faith which has proved to lift up and save men.

The third exercise of faith is in the readiness of God to help every man who will strive to obey the command of Christ to seek to win men to Him. God may be depended upon in this work.

Prayer.—Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief. Help me to “practise the presence of God” always.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**THIRD DAY: Purity—Power with God.**

Every student of the Bible finds one command of God written large on all its pages, namely, Be clean. All God's dealing with Israel, by law, by ceremonial, by providential discipline, teaches this. We must be clean. If we be not clean, we must immediately get clean, and stay clean. Of course the outward cleansings only pointed to the clean heart. The outer life may be a whitened sepulchre, but God is not mocked. He knows my heart. If I compromise with known sin, God cannot use me. Paul calls the striving of the Christian toward this end "agonizing." (Col. i. 29.) We must conquer here or we will be conquered. At this point the slavery to sin becomes so painfully conscious. Read 1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17. Purity involves motive, thought, word, and deed, the whole life and every day of life.

It is a fact of supreme importance that purity is determined by the law of contact. If two lives come into contact, one pure, the other impure, the result will depend on the relative strength of each. If the pure be the stronger, the contact will make the impure purer. If the impure be stronger, the contact will leave the pure less pure. Furthermore, the active or passive spirit has so much to do as a determining factor here. Put a drop of ink into a glass of water, and the whole is contaminated; but pour a barrel of ink into a gushing fountain of water, and very quickly it is all swept away, while the pure and purifying stream preserves its purity. Let this law be applied to Christ, as over against the contact with sin, and the purifying power of Christianity is at once explained. (1 John iii. 2, 3.) Let us realize earnestly that God can never be expected to bless a life that is willing to compromise with known sin. (Matt. v. 8.) Living communion with Christ solves this problem for every man.

Prayer.—Create within me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me. Help me to keep Thy temple clean for Thine indwelling.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**FOURTH DAY: Prayer—*The Quiet Hour.***

The morning watch, or the quiet hour at some time in the day, is positively essential to the living Christian. It was necessary for our Saviour. (Mark i. 35.) No less so is it necessary for us. Dr. Dale once said to a company of students: "Young men, you will not *find* time for many things. You must *make* time for them." The Christian is like a diver who goes down into a world where the conditions press about him to crush out his life. He is in that world for work, yet not of it in fellowship. His life comes from above, and he must have the connection unbroken and unceasing. The life of the real Christian is hid with Christ in God. Prayer is the constant emphasis of the truth that man cannot have spiritual life apart from God. Christ Himself must have His morning watch, His quiet hour with the Father. But how many Christians allow the crowded hours to be their excuse for not having a set time for prayer and communion with God! Luther rose an hour earlier for prayer on the days which promised to tax his strength in an especial way. Read Psalm 1.

But the making a time for prayer, though so important, is not all. The quality of the prayer is vital to its reality. The foregoing elements of faith and purity tell mightily here. But the most potent secret of prevailing prayer is concern for others, which drives us to God that we may be blessed in order to be a blessing to them. The man whose importunate prayer was for a friend (Luke xi. 5) had a power that he could not have had if his petition was simply for himself. Christ's glory shines at this point, where He is ever seeking blessings for men. He sanctifies Himself for their sakes. When the prayer of genuine intercession has more place in our lives we will have more power with God.

Prayer.—O Thou who didst spend the whole night in prayer with the Father, whose life must needs be nourished by constant spiritual communion with the Father, teach me how to pray.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**FIFTH DAY: *The Bible—God's Examples.***

The Bible is the sword of the Spirit. Men must be trained in the use of the sword, or it will not only be ineffective, but often dangerous. Hence we must know our Bibles. Most of its history is biography. If we would find inspiration for the way of life we must study the record of those lives which men have been inspired to make for our benefit. Some one in the Bible had a life-problem to solve somewhat like mine. (1 Cor. x. 11.) I will find my way becoming plain by discovering how God helped and guided others. The Christians who love their Bibles are the salt of the earth. No Christian ever became effective in personal work who did not love and study his Bible. (Acts xviii. 28.) The purpose at this point is to quicken the sense of the need of a knowledge of the Word of God on the part of every Christian. (John v. 38, 39.)

This is the bread of life to the spiritual man. A systematic study of the Bible is as essential to spiritual growth as regularity in eating to physical. As well expect to thrive without nourishing food as to grow spiritually without regular help from God's Word. Cut off an army from its base of supplies, and there will be no more victories. We sometimes wonder why so many Christians are so easily conquered by sin. An unopened Bible will generally enter into the explanation. A busy lawyer once heard his pastor declare that no man could read his Bible every morning for many weeks without missing it keenly if a day should be omitted. He did not believe it at the time. But the purpose to try it for a while was carried out. One day a tardy rising meant either to miss an early train or the Bible reading. The Bible was left unopened. The experience was an astonishment to the man. His sense of lack was real that day. Now his Bible is opened daily, and the fruit of the habit is precious.

Prayer.—Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life, O Christ. Thou hast translated the written word into the living Word. Help me also to do this.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**SIXTH DAY: *Studying Men—Cultivating Tact.***

Human nature is a constant quality. Hence the sure way to know much about a man is to study and know yourself. But no two people are alike. Each individual has his own peculiarities. Hence every personal worker must study men. We shall study later, in more detail, the points involved in becoming intelligently informed about the individual to be reached. But at this time we must emphasize the necessity of cultivating this habit if we would be well equipped for Christian service. The grace which is most conspicuous in the successful winner of men is that of tact in dealing with individuals. (Matt. x. 16.)

Therefore this study is always an inquiry as to how to master self as much as an effort to understand the individual with whom we hope to have a helpful influence. The fundamental condition of success here is a spirit of sympathy, rather than a readiness to criticise. The former will inevitably strengthen your influence with men. The latter will destroy it. One great help is to note how successful workers did this. The dealings of Christ with different people are luminous in this respect. Paul was most tactful, as when he spoke in Greek to the captain at the steps of the tower, and then quickly turned and spoke to the people in Hebrew. (Acts xxi. 37-40.) He saw just how to reach that captain. As the context shows, he was a man who instinctively paid deference to position or learning. The success of a physician is largely due to his careful study of his patient. Hence the benefit of having a physician who has known one for a long time. Just so will every man be the better able to help any one as a result of careful, patient study of men in general, and certain individuals in particular.

Prayer.—Help me to know myself, O Lord. Give me insight into life and character. Quicken my sympathies for all men. Grant me wisdom from on high that I may be wise in all my dealings with every man.

STUDY IV—Equipment for Personal Work.**SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.***

An equipment for Christian service cannot be put on by any artificial means. It comes only by growth, and requires time for its development. But it can be cultivated successfully. No man is justified in the opinion that he is never to expect certain gifts because he lacks them now. Consider Mr. Moody's defects as he began to grow into larger power. Every man may grow likewise. God's grace is ready for him.

1. How does an appreciation of the need of equipment help in preparation for personal work? How great is the need for such work? Are you equipped for it? Are you striving to be? If not, why not?

2. Why is faith so vital to Christian work? What are the three objects upon which a Christian's faith must be centred before he can hope to win men? What does it mean to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

3. How does purity involve the law of contact? Can you think of an instance where you have seen these principles applied among men? Is this law now at work in your life? What is the result?

4. Why did Christ need to pray? Does the Christian need to pray for the same reason? What is the element of power in intercessory prayer? What value results from having a set time for prayer? What is your custom? Is it satisfactory? Do you know a man of prayer?

5. Why should a Christian know his Bible? Give four reasons. Have you any system in your Bible study? If not, why not? What is your purpose as to this matter? Are you in earnest about it?

6. What is your habit about studying men? Why should a Christian do this? Do you know a man who is successful in winning men? What would you say is the explanation of his success?

Prayer.—Help me to put on the whole armor of God. May my loins be girt with truth, and may I have the breastplate of righteousness. May my feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.**FIRST DAY: *The Experience of Moses.***

Men have hesitated to obey the call of God to work from the beginning. One of the notable instances in the early records of Scripture is that of Moses. He did not hesitate at first. It might have been better if he had, for his zeal was without knowledge. There is a proper hesitation in the sense of unfitness; but it should never be an excuse for neglect. It should spur one on at once to preparation. On the other hand, Moses was benefited by his first attempts, because his mistakes taught him his need, and he profited by them. The greatest mistake Moses made was in being too much discouraged because his first attempts were not successful. God did not intend Moses to stop his work because of the mistakes. God led him through a discipline which helped him to be ready to attempt again.

But Moses' excuses were persistently given, one after another. Yet God would not accept them. (Ex. iii. 10-18; iv. 1-18.) The divine constraint was compelling in its power upon the heart of Moses. Even when discouraged he could not get rid of the conviction that was burning in his soul that God wanted him to help save Israel. Just so God calls men to-day to go to the help of His people in China, in India, or it may be in the city where we live. Are we resisting God's call? Are we excusing ourselves in the spirit of Moses? Have we tried and been discouraged, and therefore disposed to justify our failure to attempt anything more? If so, let us be very sure God will not accept our excuses any more than He accepted those of Moses. He may lead us to a better preparation, as He did Moses, but He will again soon demand of us that we go and do His bidding in the effort to help to win men.

Prayer.—Help me to study the experience of Moses with an earnest heart, O Lord, that I may not be condemned in the light of the truth Thou hast taught me by this record. Help me to be ready to attempt Thy will.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.

SECOND DAY: *The Experience of David.*

It is a most instructive and practical lesson which is presented in the experience of David which we are to consider. The story is told in I Samuel xvii. 31-40, where the incident occurs which marks the one moment of David's hesitation in his great contest with the giant of Gath. He had found the Lord to be his shepherd and deliverer on the Judean hills. He had no fear of the giant to be conquered, but his hesitation was due to the fact that his advisers would have him attempt to be some other than himself, and go to his task with a somewhat artificial preparation. David's inmost heart shrank from that, and his hesitation was his salvation. But mark again, as in the case of Moses, the hesitation could not for a moment justify the failure to persist in his task. The hesitation was to be overcome by discovering the best thing to do which would take it away and leave the man of faith free to face the giant with what may appropriately be called a "holy boldness."

Every Christian needs to learn this lesson. We hesitate to be anything but our natural selves. You will find other people succeeding in their way. It may or may not be your way. But you will be led to see what method of procedure is best adapted to yourself. Do not be turned from that. Cultivate that faithfully. If God did not give you certain gifts which seem to explain the success of your friends, be sure that He has some other talent for your equipment which will be far more effective in your work. David in Saul's armor is a picture of some who have failed just because of the misfit in the weapons used. It was with his simple sling that David was at home and successful.

Prayer.—Just as I am, with whatever gifts Thou hast endowed me, I pray for grace to be ready to obey Thy call, confident that with Thy help I can accomplish the work Thou wouldest have me attempt.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.**THIRD DAY: *The Experience of Isaiah.***

Isaiah's was still a different kind of hesitation. (Is. vi. 1-8.) Doubtless many Christians hesitate because of this sense of unworthiness and sin. It was the crisis-hour in the prophet's life. Here again it is evident that Isaiah did not expect to be excused from the sense of duty which burdened his soul. He felt that someone must speak for Jehovah, and while he was not worthy, his heart's cry to God breathes the idea that a cleansing from God would fit him to go. He had never before appreciated the holiness of God as on that day. The immediate result of his vision was a new appreciation of his own sin. He was doubtless one of the best men in the land before that day; but this experience went deeper than any other had done.

When a man sees his sinfulness because he has seen God's holiness, his very hesitation from a sense of unworthiness is a preparation for cleansing which will enable God to use him as never before. Note how Isaiah's realization of need was coupled with a new sense of Israel's need (v. 5), both because he had a new vision of God. Your real view of man's need will always be determined by your view of God. If you see that God's holiness means a love of purity, which must be a burning flame against impurity, then the compelling conviction will follow that any man who hopes for fellowship with God must have a clean heart. It will take hold of your soul with increasing power. The man who does not hesitate in the spirit of Isaiah needs a deepening sense of his own need of divine cleansing. Seeking that day by day from the altar of God, he may be ready to go wherever God calls him, and attempt without hesitation to do whatever God sets before him.

Prayer.—Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God Almighty! I am unclean in Thy sight! Oh, deepen my sense of sin! Give me a new vision of the beauty of holiness, until my strongest passion shall be the desire to be pure in all my life! Then send me forth to do Thy will.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.**FOURTH DAY: *The Experience of Jonah.***

Jonah's hesitation is of a more familiar sort. But here again note how Jonah's failure to understand God explains, most of all, his unworthy spirit. His experience only emphasizes once more the necessity of knowing God in order to serve Him. (Jonah i. 1-3.) His sense of duty was the real thing, because it made him feel that God required it of him. Have we heard God saying to us, each one: "Arise, go!"? Until we do our better life has not yet begun. Jonah deliberately determined to shirk. How many Christians do this continually! Many never have a deep sense of duty; but many more who have will quietly smother it if they can. Note how all the circumstances seemed at first to make it easy for Jonah to disobey. Doubtless he began to think the conditions were almost providential in opening the way of escape from duty. Glance through the brief story.

Thus do many yield to the whisper of the tempter, who leads them deeper into sin by this very snare of seeming good fortune. But it was all in vain. God had a work for Jonah, and down in Jonah's heart the true prophet, though weak, was waiting to confess his sin and attempt his duty. Alas! that discipline should so often be necessary to chasten the children of God before they are ready to do the Father's will! Even in the midst of his work Jonah's selfish and narrow views shadowed his life with bitterness toward God and an unforgiving spirit toward Nineveh. How many Christians who are useful, often helpful at times, have shadowed their service by some weakness of temper, or some protrusion of self! All life is either an attempt to perform duty or shirk it. Every deserter is trying to hide from God. The folly of it!

Prayer.—Divine Master, Thou givest me only the best thing to do. In all my work give me a vision of Thine uplifting countenance upon me. Let me not betray the spirit of the deserter, but fill me with the spirit of obedience to Thee.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.**FIFTH DAY: *The Experience of Peter.***

When a man is conscientious in his hesitation, because of education and ingrained conviction, he is not so much to be blamed as to be pitied; but his prejudice must be broken just the same. Peter's experience is in point. (Acts x.) Peter could not believe that it would be right to break the laws of God, as he saw them. He did not yet know that God had some higher laws. Christ had taught them, but His disciples had not realized the fact. Christ had taught God's love for the whole world, and that He must bring other sheep, not of this fold of Israel. Christ had laid down the principles of ignoring the letter of the old law if the spirit of the higher law demanded it; but Peter had not appreciated all this. He admitted the world-movement, but he could not imagine any one becoming a Christian who did not first become a Jew. Here was his trouble.

Alas! that it should still flourish among the followers of Christ! Men hesitate to win their fellows to Christ unless they come into the Church by the way of the Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Episcopal, or Methodist door! Others hesitate to recognize Romanists as God's people, and insist on Protestantism or nothing! Here again is the pathos of Christian history! No sane man would ignore the lines of differing convictions and methods in carrying on Christian work, but the world needs, as the Church needs, that spirit which hails with joy every sign of Christian faith and service everywhere, and seeks rather to be inclusive than exclusive, as exponents of the mind of Christ. Note that Peter's great hunger for souls made it easy for him to break with his old prejudices. He learned of a man who longed for Christ. God's vision of a larger spirit settled his prejudices, and he went. What blessings resulted!

Prayer.—O Thou who art no respecter of persons, help me to remember Thy valuation of an immortal soul, and help me to put into a secondary place any prejudice that would hinder my best effort to save men.

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.**SIXTH DAY: *The Experience of Paul.***

What! Did Paul ever hesitate? Even so. It is encouraging to the average Christian worker to know that Paul was human, and at least once shrank from his task. His was the hesitation of discouragement. But, of course, as always, it was because he was measuring the task in the light of his own limitations and conscious inefficiency. He needed a new vision of the divine helper. It was at Corinth, and the Lord spoke to him as recorded in Acts xviii. 9-11. That settled it for Paul, and "he continued there."

The hesitation of discouragement—how common is this! Again we note the sign of unbelief. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminded the Christians of his day of Israel's failure to enter into the promised land. (Heb. iii. 12-19.) He might have described it as the discouragement of unbelief, and consequently the hesitation of discouragement. Yet God had delivered them from Egypt and the Red Sea. How could they doubt His readiness and power to deliver them from the desert and the Canaanites? Yet they did. So do we likewise. We who know the saving power of God should put away all doubts forever as to His ability to give His people the victory in the battle against sin and in the triumphant winning of the world. The odds are not as great now as they were when Paul faced them. Paul never seems to have doubted again. Christ had saved him, the chief of sinners, as he considered himself, and he came to believe that therefore any man could be saved by the same mighty power. Oh, for an ear to hear the word of our Lord speaking to us as he spake to Paul!

Prayer.—Help me to realize that Thou hast many people, O Christ, waiting to hear the word of life, mayhap from my lips. They must be brought, and that, too, by the labors of Thy witnesses. Help me to conquer the hesitation of discouragement, and learn to say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

STUDY V—Hesitation to Attempt Work.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

The vision of God's presence is the notable experience of these men of whose hesitation we have been studying. Let every Christian ponder this fact with an earnest spirit, asking himself what condition is necessary to secure such a vision of God. Let us do this, and for us, as for these men, the larger, holier, truer, braver life will begin.

1. What was the character of the hesitation of Moses? What was proper about it? Was he not justified in continuing to hesitate? Have you been so discouraged by mistakes as to be inclined to make no more efforts at Christian work? Will God be satisfied with this attitude in you? What must you do? Will you do it?

2. What was the character of David's hesitation? Why was it justified? How did he overcome it? What special lesson is taught the Christian worker in this reading?

3. What was the character of Isaiah's hesitation? Why was it right? How was it overcome? Why does your view of God determine your view of man's need? Have you felt this experience of Isaiah? Do you desire it?

4. What was the character of Jonah's hesitation? Why was it wrong? What excuses do you think he made to himself for disobeying God? Do you ever make such excuses in face of plain duty?

5. What was the character of Peter's hesitation? Was it justified in any degree? Give a reason for your opinion. Why would it have been wrong to maintain it longer? What great lesson is taught in this reading?

6. What was the character of Paul's hesitation? Why was it unjustifiable? Why is it so common now? How shall it be overcome?

Prayer.—Forgive me, O Lord, my selfish fears. Help me to cease measuring duty by my own weakness, and inspire me with the confidence of David that Thou wilt give the victory over every giant of sin with which I must struggle.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.**FIRST DAY: *Unselfishness—Sympathy.***

The last Study involved the true spirit of the worker on its negative side. This Study involves the positive side. In the place of hesitation we are to strive to cultivate the qualities which are herein set forth. We are to make this study in the light of 1 Corinthians xiii. Its analysis points to the very heart and secret of this wonderful spirit of love as being found in the words, Love seeketh not her own. He who would win men to Christ must learn, above all things else, that the first requisite is unselfishness. The other side of this spirit is that of sympathy for others. Just as God's sympathy illuminates God's personal work for us, so our sympathy will reveal itself in personal work for our fellows. Paul sets forth this vital fact in Philippians ii. 5-11, where he urges that we let this mind be in us "which was also in Christ Jesus," and describes that "mind of Christ," who "emptied Himself" in order to accomplish our redemption.

Genuine unselfishness is very rare. This fact easily explains the widespread indifference to Christian work which honeycombs the Church of to-day. The moment the cross begins to be heavy, thousands who have taken the name of Christ decline to continue in His service, who climbed the hill of Golgotha, with bleeding feet and bleeding brow, for their salvation. They propose to accept that salvation, with all its blessings, but not to share the fellowship of His sufferings. Who can doubt that to many such the words of the Master must be spoken, Depart from me, I never knew you. The selfish life of the professed Christian is the veriest mockery. The world smiles at empty professions. But wherever men do reveal the Christ-spirit of unselfishness, instantly their worth is recognized and their power felt. God uses them with blessed results.

Prayer.—O Thou who didst crucify self, burn out of my life everything that is unlike Thee. Help me also to crucify the self that would put desire above duty.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.**SECOND DAY: *Humility—Courtesy.***

In the Christian the consciousness of limitations will ever tend to prevent boastfulness. The one fact which helps most here is that God expects every man to reveal Christ. By so much as I ask myself how far I am revealing Christ, I am emptied of self-exaltation by the consciousness of a pitiful failure. Not only so, but the secret of all true respect for every other man is this same fact that Christ is seeking to be fully developed in his life. Let a Christian, who has once caught a vision of Christ's unselfish sympathy for him, behold a fellow-man, however fallen and seemingly hopeless he may be, and the truth which immediately invests that fallen man with dignity and importance is the fact that he possesses the capacity to be changed until Christ shall be revealed in him. (Acts xx. 17-21.)

Therefore the courtesy of one Christian gentleman in the making goes out to another whose making is only delayed, and perhaps waiting for my effort to lead him to Christ. Surely this is the *noblesse oblige* of Christian love and Christ-like service. (Rom. xv. 1 and Gal. vi. 1.)

In keeping with this is a certain humility which is ready to confess that I do not know all about the Christian life, and a modesty of assurance which at once insists upon the reality of what I do know, without repelling one who is conscious not only of his limitations, but of mine also. Assumption of superiority in the Christian is fatal to the best results in attempting to win our fellow-sinners to faith in our Saviour.

Prayer.—As I am undeserving of Thy love, blessed Christ, help me to realize that every other undeserving man is as much the object of Thy love as I am, and give me the grace to be a Christian gentleman in all my contact with all men.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.

THIRD DAY: *Earnestness—Enthusiasm.*

The original thought of the Greeks regarding enthusiasm must be revived. It meant to them *God in a man*. It should be synonymous with our thought of earnestness, as really explaining it. It involves a thorough-going sincerity which recognizes realities, and bends all the energies of the life toward realizing manhood at its best and at its most for one's self and for every one else we can influence. Any so-called enthusiast is a misnomer unless his earnestness of spirit is centred upon the life in which God dwells and works. Paul was a real enthusiast. He could say, I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me. That explained his "agonizing" to have his own life worthy, to have the temple clean for the divine Guest's indwelling. That explains his zeal amid oppositions and persecutions and privations, such as would have staggered many another man. (John xv. 1-11.)

Paul was in "dead earnest." Note the point to that phrase which is in such common usage. The man who is in dead earnest is living just for one thing, and is dead to everything else. This is true enthusiasm. The true Christian worker will have this spirit growing in his life. He will strive to cultivate its beauty and power. The lack of it cuts the nerve of service in thousands of lives. Indifference is the deadly symptom of spiritual paralysis. The lethargy of spiritual laziness is the shame of the Church to-day. Self is the centre of such living, and God is not in the life to any such extent as to lead anyone to suspect His presence. God will come in as far as any man will let Him in; but He is never satisfied until He has the gift of the heart's best love. Let God be in the life, and men will soon know it and respond to the efforts of the man of true enthusiasm. (Gal. vi. 17.)

Prayer.—Abide in me, and I in Thee, O Christ, my Saviour, my God. By that abiding may all men know that I am Thine, and Thou art mine.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.**FOURTH DAY: Trust—*The Allegiance of a True Life.***

The confident conviction that God intends every man to be developed into the likeness of Jesus Christ greatly strengthens the assurance that God will help every man who strives to bring about this result in human lives. The spirit of trust thrives only in the realm of the true. Only so far as man is counted true will he be trusted. And only so far as men realize that God is true can they trust God. The strength of friendship rests in this—the happiness of home rests in this, that the spirit of trust thrives in the mutual confidence of true lives. Let either cease to be true, trust is supplanted by suspicion, and joy is turned to ashes. But this suggests a fact of vital importance to the Christian. (Gen. xxxix. 7-9 and 21-23.)

Since the virile strength of true friendship involves mutual trust, I must not only feel sure that I can trust God, but I must also feel that God can trust me and can count on me not to fail Him. God always has His times of need, when He will need my help. I can trust Him to help me in my time of need. Can He trust me to help Him in His time of need? This is the test of the allegiance of a true life. And mark the necessity of it. By just so much as I cannot feel sure that God can trust me I cannot feel sure that I can trust God. My faith to lay hold on God's promise to me must always be measured by my purpose to be true to my promise to God. One of the splendid facts in our business world is the widespread spirit of trust in the promises of men one to another. But many Christian business men have no such concern about keeping their promises to God as they do about being faithful to promises to their fellow-men. Here is a vital essential to a true Christian worker.

Prayer.—Let my supreme purpose be to live so that Thou canst trust me, O God. Then I shall trust Thee with a victorious faith. Thou canst not deny Thyself. May I learn to be genuinely true, true in motive, in thought, in the whole life.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.**FIFTH DAY: *Patience—Forbearance.***

Love “beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.” The apostle James suggests (i. 3, 4) that when patience has finished her perfect work little else remains to make a perfect man. The apostle then goes on to show how wonderfully patient God is with us. We ask wisdom from Him, and He giveth liberally. But we forget Him and turn away into paths of our own choosing. Then we come again, and ask again, and He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not (i. 5). Again we forget, and again return asking for more blessings, and still He giveth and upbraideth not. Divine patience! And shall we be hasty to be impatient when our efforts may not be crowned with the success for which we hoped and prayed as soon as we had expected? God forbid!

Let us learn this lesson well, not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. None the less intense must be our agonizing of spirit, our zeal in effort, our importunity in prayer. But evermore must there be a quiet waiting on God, whose Spirit worketh in and through and beyond our efforts. Immediately related to the inner spirit of this thought is the further discussion by James of the mastery of the tongue as the mark of the perfect man. But back of this is the spirit of patience in the heart. What significant words are those, “But Jesus held His peace.” (Matt. xxvi. 63.) He could not afford to let it go. The poise of such a life begets a quiet purpose to “wait patiently” in the midst of all conditions, no matter how aggravating they may be. There are many phases of Christian work, but in all of them this grace of patience must ever be found, if the life be made useful in the service of Christ and if the Christian would be at his best and most.

Prayer.—Help me to curb my temper and guard my tongue, O Thou Prince of peace. May patience have her perfect work in me. Keep me from that impatience which weakens my influence with men, and my peace with Thee.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.**SIXTH DAY: *Perseverance*—“*Love never faileth.*”**

Full of unspeakable encouragement and comfort are those words of John the Beloved regarding our Lord, Having loved His own, He loved them to the end (xiii. 1). True love will never let go. (John x. 28-30.) It is the explanation of unselfish sympathy, of courteous humility, of earnest enthusiasm, of trustful allegiance and forbearing patience. It persevereth therein unto the end. Tennyson's cry of adoration, “Strong Son of God, immortal Love,” must be the cry of every heart that has measured the tenacity of the purpose of Christ to save this sin-enslaved race.

There is a word which appears in the history of Israel which carries in it the significance of this fact. It is the word *nevertheless*. (Judges ii. 16.) We read of Israel's promises of allegiance to Jehovah, and then of its idolatry and forgetfulness of God, but we are told that “nevertheless the Lord raised them up a deliverer.” Again and again their failures are repeated; nevertheless God did not forget them. Even some such spirit must dominate the life and love of the followers of Christ who would reveal His spirit in His service. It is not easy, but it is the mark of a true Christian as a genuine hero of the faith.

This is a battle to the finish, and “there is no discharge in this war.” Let the record of difficulty and discouragement be what it may, our “nevertheless” must never be wanting. “Love never faileth.” How much that meant to Paul! And how he lived it, through scourges and stonings and shipwrecks, and hardships of every sort! This was his cry: “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.” But to finish with joy we must needs persevere unto the end. (Acts xx. 24.)

Prayer.—For Thy “nevertheless” I thank Thee, O God of wondrous grace. Let me not be cast down, let me not be weary in well-doing, but help me ever to be buoyant and hopeful.

STUDY VI—The True Spirit of the Christian Worker.

SEVENTH DAY: Suggestions for the Class.

Read 1 Corinthians xii. 31. Paul's "more excellent way" is to have the love of Christ in the heart, and then its fruit will appear in all these various graces of the Christian life. The emphasis of the value of each separate excellence of character only magnifies the need of this abiding source of all spiritual growth.

1. What reason would you give for saying unselfishness is the primary grace of all that are mentioned in 1 Corinthians xiii.? How would you prove its lack in the Christian Church? What misconception do many nominal Christians have about accepting Christ's salvation?

2. How is boastfulness hurtful in the Christian life? How is courtesy naturally related to humility? What is the *noblesse oblige* of Christian love? Is it hard for you to manifest this spirit toward men?

3. How would you describe a true enthusiast? What were the marks of Paul's enthusiasm? When is a man "dead in earnest"? How much of earnestness is in your life? How can you cultivate true earnestness?

4. What is necessary to an abiding trust? Are you a true friend of Christ? As you realize that you must trust Him, are you confident that He can trust you to be true to Him and to His cause?

5. Why is patience so necessary to successful Christian work? How do you succeed in being patient? Can you recall an act of impatience that has been hurtful?

6. Could you suggest a reason why true love must persevere to the end? Have you ever tried to realize the marvellous grace of God revealed in His "nevertheless"?

Prayer.—

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!"

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**FIRST DAY: *Christ Winning Andrew.***

The man who is striving to live up to all the light he has will soon know Christ. Such an one was Andrew. As an earnest, honest man, he was attracted to John the Baptist. As a disciple of John, he was prepared for the coming of the Christ. John's first reference to Jesus did not seem to bring immediate results, but it must have set the disciples to earnest thinking, for when he repeated his words the next day two of his hearers turned and followed Jesus. One of these was Andrew. It is supposed the other was John. (John i. 35-42.) Christ was alert for the first footfall of the approaching disciples, and asked them what they sought. There was encouragement in his tone and look. But it was a searching question. It is always the question of Christ to every soul that approacheth Him—"What seek ye?" We must know the real truth about our coming or we quickly betray the lack of truest sincerity. These two young men desired to know Jesus.

Note how Christ dealt with this sort of man. "Come and see," was His reply to their inquiry as to where He abode. Christ's attitude is ever one of invitation, especially to the honest seeker. These welcomed friends "abode with Him that day," and Christ revealed Himself to them. Doubtless there were questions and answers. Probably some of their inquiries were not spoken, but He saw the intents of their hearts, and satisfied them fully, for they went away convinced that He was the Messiah. They did not yet know how much that meant. Andrew hastened forth to announce his discovery. But to do more than this was in Christ's purpose for him, and the lesson to note here is that it is easy to win those of Andrew's attitude to confess Christ; but the effort must be made to have their experience so deepened that they will seek others for Him.

Prayer.—Divine Host, let me be Thy guest. May I ever hear Thee saying to me, in all my perplexities and longings for deeper spiritual blessings, "Come and see."

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**SECOND DAY: *Christ Winning Nicodemus.***

Nicodemus presents a most important type of man with whom to deal. He was morally upright, a genuine man, and an honest doubter. He believed in Jesus as a prophet (John ii. 23, 24), but not yet as the Messiah. Just so, men will nowadays say they consider Christ a good man, but not the Son of God. Nicodemus, however, sought more light. He also desired to see Jesus. (John iii. 1-21.) His coming by night may not mean that he shrank from the publicity, though that is the impression received from the record. Our reason for believing that he was sincere is the fact that Christ opened His heart to him, and led him into the deep truths of the spiritual life.

But note that instead of talking about Himself, as Nicodemus had hoped, Christ at once began to talk about Nicodemus. Not directly, and yet manifestly, He directed his thought to the state of the inner life of the man before Him, and emphasized the necessity of regeneration for every man. Nicodemus was not born again, and he knew it. He did not attempt to argue with Christ, but asked questions which revealed how hard it is for a man of intellectual pride to become as a little child in the presence of mystery. Christ tells him he can never understand this experience, though he may know it to be as real as he knows the movement of the winds, with all their strange manifestations. Christ describes God's provision for the salvation of men, and then lays the responsibility upon Nicodemus in that word, "whosoever believeth." Nicodemus believed Christ to be true and genuine. Christ claimed to be the Saviour of men. On that claim men must be tested. It was sufficient for Andrew. It is sufficient for Nicodemus. He did not decide that night, but the seed was sown, and later bore its precious fruit.

Prayer.—O Son of Man, lifted up for me, help me to lift Thee up for others. May I see that the love of God which gave Thee to men is worthy of my fullest faith and allegiance.

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**THIRD DAY: *Christ Winning the Samaritan Woman.***

A very different character is here. Christ “must needs go through Samaria,” and we may believe this one soul compelled Him to go, and the many that would be reached through her. (John iv. 1-42.) His heart went out to her, for she needed Him and His salvation. Note how He opened the conversation with a request for a drink. It was contrary to custom for a Jew to speak to a Samaritan. She evidently felt His strong personality, and must have betrayed something of her thought in her countenance, for He quickly presses home His truth by answering her next question with the declaration that if she knew who He was she would ask Him for living water. She was soon asking for it, and then came the searching word: “Go, call thy husband.” She was honest in her reply. Christ led her to the confession that He was a prophet. She was as far now as Nicodemus when he came.

Perhaps she could scarcely believe that salvation could come to a Samaritan through a Jew, or perhaps she wanted to get away from the subject of her sin; but she asked Jesus about the value of the places for worship in her own and His country. Then our Lord spoke those wonderful words about true worship. She felt the power of God in His truth, for she intimated that the Messiah would talk as He was talking. Then came that direct reply, “I that speak to thee am He.” What a wondrous hour for her soul! Hastening home, she is filled with the same spirit as Andrew, and pleads with her friends to “Come, see a man, which told me, etc.: is not this the Christ?” She constrained them by her new, changed spirit. They soon knew Him for themselves, as the Saviour not only of Jews, but also of Samaritans.

Prayer.—O Christ, I thank Thee that sinners in the sight of men are as welcome to Thee as the moralists and the respected. All have come short. Give to me this water of life, that I may never thirst again!

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**FOURTH DAY: *Christ Winning Peter.***

We shall note in the next Study how Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. But full allegiance did not come at once. None of the disciples understood at first the truth about Jesus. Some months passed after Andrew's work, when Christ came to the disciples at the sea, and called them to be His constant followers and associates. It was after the death of John the Baptist. (Matt. iv. 12-22.) It was not a sudden thing, as some have supposed. There were several months of earnest discussion about Jesus by these fishermen. Probably Jesus had several talks with them, and had explained everything they could grasp about Himself. When the final day came to call them to be His public followers, He asked them to undertake the work with the idea of being "fishers of men." This must have been in their minds. The same spirit that actuated Andrew and Philip must have been stirring within them to tell others about Jesus. When He promised to help them to do this, they left all and followed Him.

Peter was the leader. Christ was watching Peter with special concern. He was a marvellous make-up of contradictory qualities. At last the twelve had been led to the point where Christ pressed His claim for a public confession. (Matt. xvi. 13-17.) Again Christ approaches the subject indirectly. Probably we have the barest outline of the conversation. Probably they discussed these various opinions and saw that none of them could satisfy the facts. Then the searching question was pressed home. It was a crisis-moment. The hearts of all trembled with hesitation and desire. At last the faith of Peter leaped over all restraint, and he declared it in clear, strong words. He voiced the faith of others, but it was he who did it. What must have been the joy in the heart of Christ that day! If one man could believe in Him, then the race could and would.

Prayer.—I would be a fisher of men, O Christ. Help me to become such with Peter's power. May I not hesitate to confess Thee openly and always.

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.

FIFTH DAY: *Christ Winning Zacchæus.*

In the person of Zacchæus the publican we have still a different type of man. (Luke xix. 1-10.) He was of a hated class. To call him meant that Christ must involve Himself in the prejudices of the people. He was rich, and not by honest means alone. But there was the making of a true man in him, as there always is in every man, whatever his station and state. How much he had heard of Christ we do not know. But we have reason to believe it was more than curiosity which prompted him to see Jesus, because of the character of what Jesus said to him. He must have desired in his heart to know Jesus personally, or Jesus would scarcely have declared His purpose to go to his house. It could not have been possible for Christ to fail to see Zacchæus, for He could never overlook any man with such a desire. Zacchæus had said in his heart, I must see Jesus, and Jesus responded to that: "I must abide at thy house." Note those two "musts." When the faith of man says "I must," then the love of God says "I must."

Christ faced the prejudices of the people unmoved in His work of saving this man. He had chosen Zacchæus and nothing would affect His relation to him. That fact, made so apparent, touched the inmost soul of the man, and, with a confession which ought to have silenced the murmuring, he declared his purpose to prove his new friendship to Christ genuine. Would that men of wealth to-day might hear the words of Christ with like result! There was no reservation in the heart of Zacchæus, and therefore Christ's assurance of salvation was spoken, not so much, however, that the man might hear it, as that the people might be impressed. Hence also those added words of blessed hope for men, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Christ will abide in any man's house who desires Him.

Prayer.—Thou art as ready to save the saloon-keeper as the banker, dear Lord. Help me to be as ready to strive for the one as the other.

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**SIXTH DAY: *Christ Winning Paul.***

Paul was not a bad man, but a terribly misguided man. No one who can say he has always "lived in good conscience" can be bad at heart. (Acts xxiii. 1.) Paul verily thought he was doing God's service in persecuting the Christians, but he did it ignorantly in unbelief. The sermon of Stephen made a powerful impression on Paul. He became restless after that, and it was hard for him "to kick against the pricks" of his conscience. But he needed something more than the quiet experience of Andrew before he could be turned to Christ. He was too deeply grounded in prejudice, and too thoroughly committed to his course of persecution, to give up easily. Yet his honest heart desired to be right, and he was also brought to see Jesus. The vision touched him deeply. (Acts ix. 1-22.)

Note the directness of the charge which convicted Paul. He was hurting Christ. No man can hurt any one for whom Christ died without also hurting Christ. It is a truth to be pressed home often, when men are exerting an influence against the cause of Christ. Paul was stunned. His purpose was arrested. He sought to know the will of the Lord. For three days he sat in the darkness of his own thought, thinking, thinking! Then, "behold! he prayeth," and he was ready for the messenger from Christ, and Ananias went, his hesitation having been overcome, to say "brother Saul." Christ counted him "a chosen vessel," and yet it was to suffer great things for His sake, as well as to achieve great things for His cause. No other man, as men judge, did as much for Christianity as the apostle Paul. He was hard to win, but once won he was faithful unto death. Christ will speak to such men through the inspired record of His dealings with Paul. We cannot do better than try to persuade them to read it earnestly.

Prayer.—Forgive, O Lord, wherein I am hurting Thee. Oh, help me to guard my influence so that it may never be hurtful, but ever helpful.

STUDY VII—Christ Winning Individuals.**SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.***

These instances of Christ's work are selected, not merely to illustrate His spirit and methods, but also to quicken in us more of His longing for souls. We see how He was no respecter of persons, and how His love for all men was revealed in the thirst for every soul He could reach and help and save.

1. How would you describe the attitude of Andrew toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with him? What was Christ's desire for Andrew? How thorough-going is your conversion?

2. How would you describe the attitude of Nicodemus toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with him? Was the result immediate? What was in the way? What lesson do we learn in this experience?

3. How would you describe the attitude of the Samaritan woman toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with her? What was the result? What effect did this experience have on the disciples?

4. How would you describe the attitude of Peter toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with him? Describe the importance of Peter's conversion in its relation to the Christian Church.

5. How would you describe the attitude of Zacchæus toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with him? What proof did Zacchæus give of the character of his conversion? What effect did this incident have upon the people?

6. How would you describe the attitude of Paul toward Christ? What explained it? How did Christ deal with him? Why was such treatment necessary? What was the evidence of Paul's sincerity? How important was the life-work of the apostle Paul?

Prayer.—O Thou who didst come to seek and to save the lost, continue through me Thy work. Help me to win individuals to Thee. Help me to become a successful fisher of men.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.

FIRST DAY: *Andrew Winning Peter.*

The record given us of Andrew is brief; but it is one of the most suggestive in the Scriptures. (John i. 35-42.) He was the first follower of Jesus, and the first winner of men to Christ. To be first in these two things is to be signalized for all time in the annals of Christian history. The interest in the record increases when we note the man whom Andrew brought to Christ, even Simon Peter, the great apostle, the leader of the Twelve. Peter was among the disciples of John the Baptist, but evidently he was more slow to respond to the message of John than was Andrew. We may be very sure that when Andrew spoke to Peter he reported the actual experience he himself had in fellowship with Jesus, which had convinced him that Jesus was the Christ. Peter could not resist this, for he knew Andrew.

Three words in this brief passage shine out at the beginning of the Gospel—"He brought him." Personal work for individual men! The expression first points us to the worker, and then to the individual. The character of Andrew was such as to lead him to seek Christ with earnest heart, for his own sake. Then he was anxious to bring others to his Lord. The winner of men must have these qualifications if he would have Andrew's success. Three times we hear of Andrew, and each time he is bringing individuals to Christ. (John vi. 8 and xii. 22.) He was not a conspicuous leader, but he was seeking some one whom he might bring to Christ. As the mighty Peter at Pentecost and elsewhere revealed the power of a great leader, let us remember Andrew, the forgotten brother, whose faithful service was a link in the chain of influence which brought such blessed results. Could it be said of you regarding one immortal life—"He brought him to Christ"?

Prayer.—We are Thy witnesses, O Christ. Let us first know Thee truly. Then help us ever to be seeking to bring one and another to Thee.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.

SECOND DAY: *Philip Winning the Ethiopian.*

This Philip was not one of the Twelve. (Acts vi. 1-6.) He was only a layman, as we would now say. But his record teaches two most important lessons: first, that every Christian is equally responsible with every other Christian for the winning of men; and, second, that God gives His power to a layman as quickly and as fully as to an ordained minister. (Acts viii. 4-8 and 26-40.) The ordination of the Holy Spirit is the only sufficient ordination. When Philip won the Ethiopian to Christ, his prompting by the Holy Spirit was just the kind of prompting which the Spirit gives to us at times. But not often is the record of us—"he ran thither." The zeal of Philip must not be overlooked. His earnest spirit put something winsome into his voice when he spoke. The very tone of voice is an index of sincerity.

The Ethiopian was an honest seeker after truth. He was a Jewish convert who had no opportunity of being greatly influenced by Jewish traditions, and so was reading the prophet Isaiah with an open mind. How pathetic the situation! His very tone betrayed his "feeling after" the truth, and led to Philip's question—"Understandest thou?" Would that the Church of Christ might hear the cry of that needy soul—"How can I, except some man should guide me!" The way was open, and Philip "preached unto him Jesus." Study Isaiah liii., and you will know what Philip preached. It must be the heart of the preaching of Jesus for all time. Note the simple confession of faith which Philip considered sufficient. He saw the spirit of the man's faith to be genuine, and he was sure the letter of it would not need to be elaborate. To live a short creed is better than to learn a long one, perfectly recited, if it be denied in the life.

Prayer.—Spirit of God, guide me so that I may guide men. Let me be alert to hear Thy command to run and speak for Thee. Help me to live so that I may find men responsive to my approach.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.

THIRD DAY: *Peter Winning Cornelius.*

After Peter had been convinced that God desired him to go to Cornelius, his only problem was how to help this Gentile. (Acts x.) As he journeyed, he wondered. What could it mean? He, the leading apostle, had been given a remarkable vision; but, more remarkable still, a Gentile had been given communication with an angel! But an angel could not do the work of men. God hath chosen by the preaching of men to save the world. The heart of Cornelius was cleansed by the Spirit of God, because of his honest repentance and earnest effort to be faithful to his light (v. 15); yet he had not sufficient light to know Christ, except the Gospel be brought to him. So is it with every man, however noble his life.

Peter's work was not difficult here, but it was necessary. Persuasion was not needed, but more light on the path of duty. His listeners drank in his words with leaping hearts. It was a moment such as explains the joy of heaven, and while Peter preached, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." They magnified God, and were baptized. Naturally they plead with Peter to tarry some days longer. They were hungry for the bread of life. We cannot doubt that during those days others were sought out and won to the new faith. How thankful was Peter that he had overcome his hesitation, and had broken his old prejudices, in being obedient to the heavenly vision! Some men who have not been accustomed to attend the services of the Church will sometimes reveal a quality of life akin to that of Cornelius. The Spirit prompts us to go and speak to them. Let us learn to accept all opportunities which invite this effort. They will be ready to receive us beyond what we suppose.

Prayer.—I thank Thee, Lord, for Thy great love for men. Help me to realize that the best of men need Christ.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.**FOURTH DAY: *Aquila Winning Apollos.***

In Acts xviii. 24–xix. 7 we have another glimpse at personal work, which sets forth most important teachings. We sometimes hear it said that if one be honest in his belief, that is all that is necessary. This is not true. Cornelius was thoroughly honest in his belief, but he needed Christ, and needed an intelligent faith in Christ in order to appropriate Christ. So Apollos was both honest and earnest, but he knew only the baptism of John. He was even “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures,” and was doing his best; but “this is eternal life,” to “know,” and Apollos did not yet know the way to God as he should. People will talk of the sending of missionaries to the devotees of other faiths, and will assert that it is folly to do this, yet they do not know the will of God, or they have no concern about doing it. Surely, if Apollos needed the Gospel, all men who are out of Christ need His Gospel.

Apollos needed to know “the way of God more perfectly.” Aquila and his wife probably had no such natural gifts as Apollos; but they knew the Gospel of Christ better than he. He had never heard of the Holy Ghost. The preaching of John he knew, but the world needed more than that. Aquila felt the lack in this eloquent man. Alas! how many eloquent men, who can quote Scripture glibly, do not know of the Holy Ghost, and have never received His power! Out of the ranks of the earnest Christian workers Aquila appears for a moment to teach the Church of Christ one of its most important lessons. The gifts of men are not to be despised, but rather cultivated to their fullest capacities; yet without the gift of God’s power they are but as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.”

Prayer.—Teach me Thy way more perfectly, O God. May I realize that until I have learned this, it will not avail to be eloquent in speech. Baptize me with Thy Spirit of power.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.

FIFTH DAY: *Paul Winning Lydia and the Jailer.*

Out of the many whom Paul won to Christ, these two are mentioned here because they are the trophies of his first work in Europe, by the grace of God. A woman and a jailer! (Acts xvi. 14, 15, 22-34.) They were counted on about the same level then, though the jailer would be considered the more important of the two. Paul had not only learned that God was not calling "many mighty" at first, but also that the soul of a sales-woman was as precious in the sight of heaven as that of a queen. He would preach Christ to anyone who would listen, and the first one was this woman. We read that God opened her heart. This was not in spite of her desire, but because, like Cornelius, she had been honestly striving toward the light. Paul's words were bread to her hungry soul. Who that measures the value of a Christian home and Christian womanhood can fail to appreciate the far-reaching import of this conversion?

The case of the jailer is more striking. During many days the damsel (xv. 17, 18) had declared Paul and Silas to be showing the way of salvation. He must have heard of this, probably had seen them; but now he receives Paul as an apparent criminal, suffering from stripes, and sorely persecuted. Many Christians never dream of being on the watch for souls when the time of persecution comes. But from that inner prison came prayers and praises which were heard. Then the earthquake. Then the stricken conscience of the jailer. Then that most urgent cry of every needy soul—"What must I do to be saved?" Then the one only answer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!" Paul explained what this meant, and they accepted Christ. It was the beginning of Christian Europe.

Prayer.—For Christian ancestry, O God of the nations, I thank Thee. Unto whom Thou hast given, of them Thou dost expect. Help me to be faithful, so that some one coming after may be thankful for my life.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.**SIXTH DAY: *Paul Winning Onesimus.***

The short letter of Paul to Philemon is one of the gems of all literature. Its setting gives it beauty and power. Its Gospel of salvation must give hope to those who doubt that Christ can save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon who ran away, drifted to Rome, and was converted under Paul. The law required a man who found a slave to return him. The fact that Onesimus was willing to go back reveals the thoroughness of his conversion. But the law allowed a friend to intercede for a slave, and even gave him a right to buy the slave, if the master would not allow the slave to earn his freedom. These points appear in the letter. Paul gives reasons why Philemon should set Onesimus free, yet he does not actually ask this. But he takes care to assert his right, as he says he will pay anything Onesimus may owe.

Now read the letter in the light of this setting. The great lesson is that Paul is as much concerned for this runaway slave as he would be for a king. He saw the possible Christ there, as fully as in the wealthy Philemon. We also see how Paul must have taught restitution to the new convert. Many a man hesitates to become a Christian because of what he knows he should do as a Christian. Onesimus faced this, and yet confessed Christ. Paul would not make it easy for Onesimus to become a Christian, if something hard must be done first. Paul knew nothing could be better for the spiritual life of Onesimus than to go back to his master, and obey the law. Yet he plead for mercy with Philemon. How the love of Christ throbs in it all! It is the Gospel of the delivery from the slavery of sin through Him who has paid the price of our ransom with His own blood.

Prayer.—Divine Redeemer, oh, let me realize that I am not my own, but am bought with a price, and that I am debtor to every man.

STUDY VIII—The Disciples Winning Individuals.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

This Study has touched upon method only incidentally. The main purpose is to see the picture of the activity of the early Christians, whose fidelity explained the progress of the cause of Christ. It is an inspiration to the coming generations thus to see the spirit of the personal worker anxious and earnest in striving to win individuals.

1. What is Andrew's distinction among Christians? What qualities of character did he reveal? What opinion concerning his life is justified by the few glimpses given us?

2. What was Philip, as a Christian worker? What most important lesson does this fact teach us? What sign of his zeal is given in the record? What did he preach about Jesus?

3. What kind of a man was Cornelius? Why did he need Christ? What does Peter's readiness to go to Cornelius teach us?

4. What kind of a man was Apollos? What more did he need? Have you a friend of culture and refinement who is not a Christian? What is your duty toward that friend? Will you be faithful to that duty?

5. What does it mean for us that Paul went to Europe? (Answer out of general information.) What was significant in the conversion of Lydia? What does Paul's experience which brought him into the jail at Philippi teach us about Christian service? What great question is asked here? What does the answer mean? (Previous Studies tell us.)

6. What were the facts about Onesimus which led Paul to write this letter to Philemon? What is Paul's ground for his plea that Onesimus should be set free? How does this letter set forth the Gospel? Is there some Onesimus waiting for your help?

Prayer.—As Thy servants began to serve Thee by seeking to win their brethren and fellow-men, so help me to do, O Lord. May I not be a fruitless servant.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.

FIRST DAY: *Striving to Win Individuals.*

Almost everything heretofore written suggests this way of work. It is the most important for every Christian. The purpose in bringing it to the attention here is to urge every reader of the book to begin this effort to win an individual to Christ. Read Daniel xii. 3. It is not intended to attempt any further evidence of the duty or privilege of this work. No honest Christian can doubt either. Will you attempt your duty? Face carefully this question—Who is the first person whom I ought to try to win to Christ? Turn to Study X, and read it through. In some one of the classes suggested you cannot fail to find some one who touches your life who is not a Christian. Decide upon the individual definitely. Then turn to Matthew xxviii. 19, 20, and especially note Christ's promise to be with you in your attempt. Then proceed with the succeeding Studies, having that particular individual in mind.

Do more than this. Go to your minister and tell him of your purpose. If you are willing, tell him the name of the individual whom you are seeking to reach. Make a covenant of prayer with him. Suggest the helpfulness of a Prayer Circle among a few fellow-Christians of like earnestness. Begin with a small Prayer Circle. Consider the other ways of working mentioned in this Study, and plan to do as much in them as possible. This is the main business of the Christian in this world. Will you enter into it in earnest? Are you willing to go empty-handed into the presence of God to give your account? May the constraining love of Christ compel you as it did Paul. (2 Cor. v. 14-21.) May the burden of souls come upon your heart until it will drive you to God for His blessing and help! To win one immortal soul to Jesus Christ will put a value into your life which nothing else you may do can give it.

Prayer.—Thou hast given Thy life for me, O Christ. Let me give my life for Thee. Oh, let me not be satisfied to live for self. Give me the burden of souls.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.

SECOND DAY: *Teaching in the Sunday-school.*

The Bible is the only Scripture which has a distinctive place for the child. This fact alone betrays a fatal lack in the sacred writings of all other religious teachings. There is evident purpose in giving us the record of the childhood of Samuel. (1 Sam. ii. 26 and iii. 1-10.) It is clearly intended to emphasize the appreciation we should have of the capacity of the child, a fact too often forgotten. God's thought of Samuel is a picture of God's thought for every child.

It is a law of the land that no child under seven years of age can commit a crime. The law judges that moral responsibility is not adequately developed before that age. Between the ages of seven and fourteen exceptional cases are recognized. Children from eight to fourteen are in our reformatories. But at fourteen a boy or girl is fully amenable to law, and pronounced morally responsible. These laws are the result of a widespread study of the capacity and maturity of the child. Therefore the law allows a child at fourteen to choose a guardian for life. But therefore it is perfectly evident that this maturity in the child makes him competent intelligently to make a life-choice of Jesus Christ.

We must save the child. Do this, and all our problems are solved. The Sunday-school is the greatest of all training schools for personal workers. There is no better place for an earnest follower of Christ to begin the task of striving to win individuals to Him. Helps for this work are abundant. Opportunities are many. The need of teachers is great and constant. All kinds of classes are available for all kinds of workers. It is a fine school in which to learn self-mastery and cultivate the gifts for effective putting of the truth. Here is a field ripe to the harvest. Enter in. Make the beginning here.

Prayer.—Give me the spirit of a little child. Help me to be ready to tell the story of Thy love to the children, trusting Thee to help me in the work. Let me not shrink from the responsibility of souls.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.**THIRD DAY: Witnessing in Religious Meetings.**

There are those who hesitate to speak privately to an individual who find it less difficult to speak in a public gathering. Others will consider it impossible to address an assembled company. They decide that the Lord did not endow them with the special gift of public speech or public prayer, and complacently dismiss the thought of attempting to witness thus for Christ. This is a mistake. This was the attitude of Moses, but God would not accept it. Read again Exodus iv. 10-17. The writer knows a strong man who was called upon to offer prayer at a mid-week service, and who bravely made the attempt, but actually fainted in doing so. After such an experience the vast majority of men would decide never to attempt public prayer again. Not so this man. After the meeting he went to his pastor and said: "When you think I ought to try this again, call on me, and I will try." His own victory was worth more in the development of his spiritual life than can be estimated.

Incidents could be multiplied to show how helpful one's testimony in public has been. Once in the writer's presence a young man arose in a meeting and made a brief, earnest statement concerning his faith and hope in Christ. A young lady, at the close of the meeting, said that statement had influenced her to make the decision to become a Christian. Such witnessing ever brings a blessing in return to the one who speaks or prays. The two requisites for the best results in this service are careful preparation and brief participation. Encourage those who speak, when their words are helpful, by saying so to them. Help to make the atmosphere of the meeting sympathetic and inspiring. Such meetings will furnish bread to hungry souls and strength to many burdened hearts.

Prayer.—Thou hast charged me to be Thy witness, dear Lord. May I not only believe with the heart, but also confess with the mouth, and strive to say the word in season which will be helpful to others.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.

FOURTH DAY: *Writing Letters.*

This method of personal work may be made a great means of grace which every Christian may cultivate. Read again Paul's personal letter to Philemon, and John's personal letter to Gaius. (3 John.) It is known that Phillips Brooks practised this method of reaching men with most helpful results. Sometimes a letter may be a better means of communication than conversation. The letter enables the writer to make a full statement without interruption, and one is very likely to ponder its contents somewhat before replying. On the other hand, we must not yield to the temptation to write instead of speaking because it would seem to be easier, except as we would make the letter the occasion for a conversation. Many times the letter will be an excellent way of securing a personal appointment, when the meeting will be all the more successful because of the thoughtful hours occasioned by the correspondence.

Christians generally have not emphasized or utilized the written or printed page as a means of influencing their friends for Christ. Some pastors and Christian leaders have made them most effective. But the individual should utilize them more frequently. Do you know of a friend to whom you have hesitated to speak, and to whom you might write? If so, plan at once to write. Consider with care and prayer the message to be written. Do not be so concerned about the finish of the rhetoric, but let it throb with the earnestness of a true friend. Let it breathe loving sympathy, and the spirit of Studies VI and XII. Follow it with daily prayer. Study the answer to find something which will justify a second letter, should it be needed. Be sure that God will bless the effort, and expect blessings to result. Your own life will be greatly enriched by such expressions of the thoughts and desires of your heart.

Prayer.—Thou wouldst have us to be all things to all men, if by any means we may win some. Help us in this way of working for Thee to learn skill and efficiency.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.**FIFTH DAY: *The Work of Prayer Circles.***

In that upper room at Jerusalem we have the picture of the first Prayer Circle of Christian workers. (Acts i. 13, 14, and ii. 1-4.) Christ had commanded them thus to tarry for the gift of power from God (i. 4-6). It is vital to the individual that he have his quiet hour alone with the Lord; but it is vital to the Christian company that the Prayer Circle be established and cultivated. The religious conferences which characterize our time, having for their end the deepening of the spiritual life, demonstrate the helpfulness, not to say the necessity of a custom which will draw individual workers together for conference and prayer regarding the Master's work.

The special thought in this reading is regarding a Circle of Prayer which shall be formed by a few earnest workers in the Church, or Association, or Sunday-school, who are striving to be effective in winning individuals to Christ, and who are anxious to stimulate a growing desire for spiritual activity among their fellow-Christians. Such a Circle should aim for two things: first, to draw into its number other Christians; and, second, to be mutually helpful in planning and attempting definite Christian work. Only those who are in full sympathy should become members of this Circle. It will be far more effective, if small, and every member consecrated, than if large, with some hesitant or lukewarm. It must be a Circle where complete confidence marks the conferences, for to do its best work two or more must agree concerning the subjects discussed. The power which may be developed by this way of working cannot be estimated. It has never been utilized as it should. The first Christians needed that upper-room meeting. Just as surely do we need such meetings.

Prayer.—Thy promise is to meet with two or three gathered in Thy name, dear Master. Inspire Thy children to cultivate this privilege of securing the strength which comes from union in conference and prayer.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.

SIXTH DAY: *Helping Others to Work.*

That is a most suggestive record which tells us how Barnabas sought out young Saul of Tarsus and persuaded him to begin a more aggressive service for Christ. (Acts xi. 22-26.) Paul had gone back home. His zeal at Damascus would seem to have been cooled because few were ready to believe in him as a genuine convert. Paul's need was the need of everyone beginning the Christian life. It is of vital importance that some one be watching for a way to help such to enter upon definite Christian work. The Church must recognize more constantly the importance of having every new convert expect to attempt some kind of definite service as a follower of Christ. It is of utmost importance for the sake of the new Christian. His growth is involved in such a service. Moreover his help is needed in advancing the work of the Kingdom. (Matt. x. 5-20.)

Here is a phase of personal work neglected to a lamentable degree. Christian leaders may well study efficiency at this point. "To every man his work" should be a working order for all the rank and file of the Lord's army. It should be in the plan of every one who is striving to win an individual to Christ to have something for that individual to undertake in entering upon the Christian life. The rule should have no exceptions. It may be an agreement to pray daily for someone, but it should be something. Furthermore, the cultivation of a sympathetic spirit, like that of Barnabas, ever ready to encourage a hesitant Christian to be more aggressive, is a duty and privilege to be recognized by all personal workers. Helping others to work is one of the best ways of working. It is the explanation of every thriving Church or Association.

Prayer.—As I realize that my growth is advanced by my faithful service, help me, my Master, to draw others into Thy service, that they too may have a richer fruitage.

STUDY IX—Ways of Personal Work.**SEVENTH DAY: Suggestions for the Class.**

Since power increases with service, every follower of Christ must be concerned about the work he is to do, and must make it definite, with earnest and persevering purpose. A truly enthusiastic Christian may be engaged in all these ways of working, and others also.

1. What is the purpose of emphasizing personal work for the individual at this point? What promise does Christ give to the worker? What steps are suggested for the worker? Are you striving to win one person?

2. What is the peculiarity of the Bible regarding the child? Give the law regarding the moral responsibility of the child. What advantages are offered the Christian worker in Sunday-school teaching? Are you attempting this work? If not, why not?

3. How do most Christians feel about this way of working? What should be the spirit of the obedient follower regarding the attempt to witness publicly for Christ? What reflex blessings would it bring?

4. What advantages are found in letter-writing for the person writing? What for the person addressed? What temptation must be guarded here? What spirit should mark the letter? Have you tried this method? Will you?

5. Why did Christ tell His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they received the blessing of power? What advantages are found in the Prayer Circle? What should be its aims? Who should be its members? Will you undertake to help form such a Circle?

6. What did Barnabas do in helping Paul to enter upon Christian service? What is the general feeling of many professing Christians about active service for Christ? What should be the rule for every Christian? Do you know one whom you could help to some definite Christian service?

Prayer.—O Thou who hast said “I must work while it is day,” help me to do it faithfully.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.

FIRST DAY: *The Home Relatives.*

The final test of a Christian is found in his home life. It is a sad fact that many who are courteous and considerate in all other relations fail to reveal the gentleness and unselfishness of a true Christian spirit at home. Business men, who dare not forget themselves when dollars and cents are involved, have been known to leave their kindness outside of the front door of their own homes where their "loved ones" live. The mere fact is disgraceful, but is too frequently true to be questioned. But this fact is fatal when we consider the duty and privilege of witnessing for Christ in the home. How many Christians find it easier to speak of personal religion anywhere else than at home! The reason is not far to seek. There is a familiarity that breeds contempt when that familiarity has discovered the home-life to be different from that which is seen of men.

There is a message of Jesus Christ, too often forgotten, which must be emphasized again. When the Gadarene had been healed (Mark v. 1-20), and desired to be allowed to go with Jesus, we read: "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not," but sent him home to his friends to witness for Christ. This was the hardest thing the man could have done. His old friends and relations knew his past. But just this thing meant a strength of character for himself and a power of testimony for Christ which would have been impossible among strangers. It is when the Christian lives Christ among those who know him best that he will find it easy and natural to enter into the heart-to-heart talks that will enable the Spirit of God to use him to win loved ones to his Lord. How do your "loved ones" measure your character?

Prayer.—Dwell in my heart, O Christ, so that Thy dwelling in my home shall sanctify all earthly loves with the heavenly love which will make my home the dearest place in the earth, and the threshold of the heavenlies.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.

SECOND DAY: *Companions in Boarding-houses.*

For increasing thousands the only home-life is that which can be secured in a boarding-house. Especially is this true for thousands of young people whose life-struggle is intensified because of the lack of those helpful influences which mark the Christian home. Hence their problem as to how to be true in their allegiance to Christ becomes more serious. Too many boarding-houses have little or no home atmosphere. Blessed be the Christian boarding-house keeper who determines to cultivate a positive Christian atmosphere in her home! There is no loneliness like that of a great city in which one feels lost in the crowd. The young Christian cannot long continue strong who has no Christian fellowship. If your lot be cast in a boarding-house, and you discover there one who is hungry for fellowship and sympathy, God's indication of the work He would have you attempt is very plain in the condition itself.

There is a picture of Joseph which may be studied with profit here. It is in Genesis xxxix. 20–xl. 8. Though cast into prison, Joseph determined to make the best of the situation, not only for himself, but for his fellow-prisoners. His splendid witnessing for God was constant at all times, and his power increased steadily as a man of God. What lonely young Christian can fail to be inspired by this record? Not only to be true in the face of the odds that multiply against one in the loneliness of a great city boarding-house, but to attempt with all the earnestness suggested in the previous Studies to win fellow-boarders to Christ and the fellowship of Christian people. Does it lie in your pathway to serve the Master thus? If so, learn of Joseph, and reveal the sympathy of a Christian, and attempt the task of a redeemed follower of Christ, who had not where to lay His head, but was faithful.

Prayer.—O Thou who hast trod the wine-press alone, help me to learn Thy victory. Give me grace to be faithful in my lot and station, a consistent witness for Thee.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.**THIRD DAY: Companions in Business.**

Most men spend the largest part of the day in the routine of life known as the business world. That is to say, the greater part of the life is spent in this realm. If, therefore, a Christian fail to be true to Christ there, he inevitably fails for the greater part of his life. Emphasis must be laid upon the necessity of realizing that no line can be drawn between the religious and the secular in the Christian life. Read Acts x. 1-4. Nowhere is the constraint more imperative upon a man to live his religion than in his business life, and to live it in a most thorough-going way. Paul's injunction in Romans xii. 11 manifestly teaches that the secret of true diligence in business is the purpose to be serving the Lord thereby. We know that in the business world it counts very little to say of a stranger that he is a professing Christian. But when a man of splendid integrity, whose word is as good as his bond, whose humanity as an employer compels admiration from all who know him, is pointed out as being a Christian, then the cause is strengthened.

With this life for the first argument every Christian must be concerned about witnessing for Christ in the business world. The way surely opens where the enthusiastic Christian seeks to find it. Men once said of a well-known successful neighbor, "His business is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but he packs pork to pay the expenses"! There are Christian employers who plan to have a personal conversation with every man in their employ regarding their religious life. There are young men who patiently plan and prayerfully persevere in the effort to win one, and another, of their fellows to Jesus Christ. Have you been ready to do this? Is there a friend who knows you as a Christian who wonders why you have never shown your colors?

Prayer.—Thou hast taught me to be diligent in season and out of season to testify for Thee, O Lord. Give me grace to remember Thee when it is easy to forget, and to be loyal as Thy witness in the busiest days.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.

FOURTH DAY: *Attendants at Church.*

Of the non-Christians attending Church with some degree of regularity there are two classes to be discriminated: first, those who are open-minded toward the claims of Christ; second, those who are somewhat fixed in the attitude of adherents and are quite content to remain such, having decided that nothing more should be expected of them. They ignore the efforts of Christians to win them to open allegiance to Christ. But these two classes in the Church demand our endeavor to win them, and we dare not neglect the opportunity which brings this duty to us. Read Ezekiel xxxiii. 1-6. It will not suffice to say they hear the Gospel preached from the pulpit. Personal work for the individual must be persistently undertaken by minister and people in addition to the public message.

A very serious fact must be noted here. There is a caste spirit in the Christian Church which militates against the best results in Christian work. We deplore the caste spirit in pagan lands, but we condone it at home. The spirit of the elder brother in Luke xv. is in the Church to such an extent that the spiritual prodigal often shrinks from the thought of coming to the Father's house for help and sympathy. When a truer Christian spirit marks the Church of Christ there will be more attendants at Church seeking the way of life. Meantime, while we strive to cultivate this true atmosphere of Christian sympathy, we must strive to win those who do come to the Church to full allegiance to Christ. Is there such an one whom you should attempt to win? How long have you known this friend or acquaintance, without making an effort to exert a personal influence with him for Christ? Here men have a special expectation regarding us as witnesses. Let us justify their expectation.

Prayer.—O Thou who didst stand in the Temple-court on that great day of the feast and invite men to come to Thee, help me likewise to speak so that one and another may say of my Church-home—"I was born there."

STUDY X—The People We Meet.

FIFTH DAY: *Vacation Acquaintances.*

The modern vacation is taking large place in our busy age. The feverish drive, the killing pace of modern life compel larger plans for rest and reinvigoration. The serious character of the vacation problem is becoming apparent. It is a time for general relaxation. Many customary restraints are set aside for a time. More than one life has been undone by a vacation experience. Thousands of young people who are students find the problem especially serious. Some think the special time for the testing of a young man is when he goes to college; but in fact a time of greater testing is when he comes to the vacation period between the college years. This is especially true of the Christian student, but it is true of all Christian people. The tendency of the average summer or winter resort is a subtle and dangerous one as regards its effect upon the spiritual life. The usual surroundings of home, Church, and business do not bring their regular obligations, and the sense of responsibility grows lax.

When Daniel went to the court of Babylon the new surroundings were full of temptations to lower his standard; but he determined to be true. (Dan. i. 8-21.) For two reasons the Christian of to-day must determine likewise. First, for the sake of his own spiritual life; and, second, because opportunities will be presented which will be especially advantageous for personal work. There will be more time for conference and persuasion. It is a serious mistake to suppose the vacation is not a time for such service. This feeling about Christian work at such a time is one of the devil's strongest means of preventing the efforts which many should be making to win friends to Christ. How do you maintain your Christian life during your vacation time?

Prayer.—Give me Daniel's strength of character and fidelity to Thee, O God. Let me never compromise anywhere with my standard of righteousness, but help me to be as loyal to Thee at my vacation time as at other times.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.**SIXTH DAY: *Social Companions.***

A Christian young woman was attending an evening reception. In the midst of a dance a friend in passing whispered that she wished to speak with her. When they withdrew, the friend burst into tears and said she was so hungry for help and guidance in respect to the Christian life. She declared that she was tired of the shallow life of their social set, and said to the Christian: "I thought you could help me. You are a Sunday-school teacher and a Christian. How can I find peace and satisfaction in spiritual things?" The Christian friend was astounded. She had not dreamed that this gay young woman was concerned about religious questions. Moreover, she herself had never spoken to a friend about personal religion, and now felt utterly helpless to assist her pleading questioner. This she was frank enough to confess, and suggested that an appointment be made with the friend to go with her for a conference with her pastor.

When she came to her pastor to make the appointment, the nominal Christian was herself under deepest conviction. This unexpected experience had revealed her to herself, and had opened her eyes to the fact that many were doubtless as hungry for spiritual bread as her friend. Not only so, but she had learned that one might speak a helpful word even in the midst of the social gathering. She told the story to her pastor with a new purpose. Not only was her friend brought to Christ, but she herself was drawn nearer than ever before, and entered into a richer experience in her Christian life. Read John ii. 1-11. The wine of spiritual gladness is ready at every feast for those who are willing to seek the help of Jesus in striving to witness for Him. No social pleasure can compare with the joy which crowns this service.

Prayer.—Thou didst attend the feast, my Saviour, and didst rejoice in the rejoicing of men; but evermore Thou didst seek to bring to men the deeper joy of the spiritual life. Help me to be faithful in like endeavor.

STUDY X—The People We Meet.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

Our ideals must ever be attempted. Every Christian should always feel free to witness loyally and earnestly for Christ. There are conditions when it were better to wait for the word to be spoken. But this must be the exception and not the rule for the earnest Christian. The Scriptures teach that the Christian should testify for Christ—"in season, and out of season." Surely the spirit of that phrase should be observed!

1. Why is consistent Christian living so essential in the home? Why do so many Christians find it more difficult to speak for Christ at home than elsewhere? How is it in your home? What blessings result from faithful witnessing in the home?

2. Why is it important to emphasize the subject of witnessing for Christ in the boarding-house? How does this life increase the struggle of the young Christian? What is the lesson from the life of Joseph?

3. What is the estimate placed upon Church membership in the business world? Why is it vital to the Christian's own spiritual life that he shall live his religion earnestly in his daily business relations? What is your custom in regard to this habit?

4. What two classes must be noted among Church attendants who are not communicants? Why is it difficult to reach the second class? How is the caste spirit in the Church to be overcome? Is anyone near you, waiting?

5. Why is the vacation problem increasingly important for the Christian? What is the lesson from Daniel's loyalty? Have you ever striven to be true to Christ during the vacation time?

6. What lessons would you draw from the incident given of the young women? Do you plan to bring an inquirer to your pastor? Society needs Christ.

Prayer.—Divine Master of men, help us to put the things of God first always.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.**FIRST DAY: *His Temperament.***

The study of men is most important in every realm of life where influence is to be exerted. But most vital is it to success in winning individuals to Christ. Many fail in the effort to approach a friend upon the subject of personal religion because they have not studied the individual to be won. It were far better to take time to study the person, and when this has brought some understanding of his characteristics, the word may be spoken wisely. Perhaps the most distinctive thing about each individual is his temperament. We speak more familiarly of the temper as hasty, or even as fretful or calm. Temperament is that disposition of mind which reveals the quality of the temper and the degree of true temperance or self-mastery in the individual. The lack of this betrays weakness always, a weakness apparent in irritability which is hasty in its manifestation. True self-mastery means a temperance in which the qualities of character are so evenly tempered that patience and sweetness supplant irritability and hasty anger. We catch the spirit of the truth in James iii.

The personal worker must ever be guarding his own temper as he studies that of another. To the even-tempered he can speak with freedom, but to the nervous and irritable he must speak most guardedly and gently, for such an one is not only easily repelled, but difficult to approach again. Temperament has much to do with the disposition of the mind and heart toward the truth. Selfishness is back of the weak temperament, and the sense of the need of a Saviour is not keen. Rather is there in such persons a sense of having been unfairly dealt with, of having suffered more than their share, and therefore a doubting of the love of God. For such the great need is a vision of the love of God.

Prayer.—O Thou who didst hold Thy peace in the midst of most trying conditions, help me to learn to master myself as I strive to be wise in dealing with those of weak and unhappy temperament.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.**SECOND DAY: *His Circumstances.***

Many things in the life of an individual are explained the moment we know his circumstances. Unless we can learn something of his antecedents and surroundings, we will be considerably in the dark in the attempt to approach him intelligently in regard to his religious life. One who is largely without friends, whose sense of loneliness is keen, can best be reached by a cordial spirit of sympathy which is ready to make him actually know that you desire to be his friend. One who is surrounded by practically everything that a home and social opportunities can give in the way of companions has no such hunger for sympathy, but will have some other desire, which must be discovered if possible. One who is in peculiar temptations because of surroundings which are dangerous will need help of a different sort from one who may have Christian influences about him in his daily life. Poverty may be the stumbling-block in the way of one's pride, while sorrow may be the burden of another's heart. Note how the circumstances in Paul's life made Ananias hesitate to go to him at Damascus, but how his hesitation was removed when he had learned one additional fact, that Paul now prayed. (Acts ix. 10-18.)

Just how to learn of one's circumstances must be left to the Christian worker. Be kind and patient in the study of the man. When you know his circumstances, always make it your rule to put yourself in the fullest sympathy in his place; and as you realize what one would appreciate in like circumstances, strive to show to the friend whom you seek to win exactly what you would wish to be shown to you in like circumstances, whatever sort of helpful attention it may be. This cannot fail to help in securing a response from him that will open the way for further progress.

Prayer.—May I not be a creature of circumstances, O Lord, but ever rise above them in mastery. May I learn to sympathize with those whose circumstances have hindered their spiritual lives.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.

THIRD DAY: *His Companions.*

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 33, 34) that "evil communications corrupt good manners," he continues to specify that the secret of the influence which is evil is to be found in the fact that "some have not the knowledge of God." It is ever true that the sneering word, the shallow argument, the easy criticism against Christianity, will spring from ignorance. But it is just this shallow argument which ensnares hundreds of young people. Our Lord gives another reason for much of this influence in John iii. 19-21. Many who are not willing to attempt the struggle against sin are glad of an excuse which will somewhat quiet their consciences. They not only love the darkness which hides the knowledge of their sin from others, but they prefer the darkness of unbelief to the light of faith which will compel a righteous life.

In considering one's circumstances, we noted that one element is that of associates. This oftentimes cannot be changed. But our reference to one's companions is to one's voluntarily chosen friends. When the individual whom you wish to reach has hurtful companions, discuss this subject at the very start, in all kindness, but earnestly. One of two things must be done: either he must be willing to break from them, and seek new friends among Christians, or he must determine to strive to win them to Christ also. As a rule, it would be a mistake to undertake to answer the arguments of such companions which are frequently reported. Urge the plain fact that earnest Christians are better companions than those who are not. Point to the fine Christian men, young or old, who are worthy of emulation and whose friendship would be helpful.

Prayer.—Thou art a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Help me, O Christ, to know Thine increasing friendship, and to lead those who are not Thy friends to come into fellowship with Thee and Thy people.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.**FOURTH DAY: His Weaknesses.**

One vulnerable point is generally discovered in the life which is surrendering to sin. There may be strong and admirable qualities, which oftentimes cover the weak spot; but it will be there, and because of it all the good points do not avail. That one vulnerable point is the place which the darts of temptation strike. When Paul urged the putting on of the *whole* armor of God (Eph. vi. 10-18), it is to be noted how he emphasized such words as *all* and *always*. Any willingness to compromise with *one* sin is fatal to real strength of character, for that must be built by conquering at the weakest point in the struggle of the soul. Therefore we must study the individual to be reached, not only to learn what his weakness may be, but how to watch against it in planning to help him.

For so many young men the fatal weakness is the appetite for intoxicating drink. The curse of the drink habit has shackled thousands of splendid men in miserable slavery. (Prov. xx. 1.) This weakness is mentioned because it is generally soon apparent, as we study the individual. Others are not so easy to discover. It may be a subtle intellectual pride which will not give the truth fair consideration. It may be the weakness of a stubborn will. Whatever it is, seek to discover it patiently and wisely. Conversation will often disclose it, or careful inquiry of those who know him. In every case the one truth to urge is that Christ is able to give strength sufficient to conquer every sin and every weakness. Always make plain the two constant essentials of faith and repentance, in order to receive Christ. If a man has any longing to be free from the slavery of any sin, this truth about Christ will win him in time.

Prayer.—When I find a man overtaken in a fault, help me, dear Lord, to strive to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering myself, lest I also be tempted and become a castaway.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.**FIFTH DAY: His Strong Points.**

Oftentimes it will help to conquer his weak point by encouraging a man to develop his strong points. (Rom. xii. 21.) He can do something which will entertain a company where you are anxious to have him become acquainted. Perhaps he loves music, or art, or has the gift of helping boys to have a good time. Plan something for the purpose of securing a stronger hold upon him at his strong point. Always cause him to feel that he is useful and helpful. Something in every man responds to the appeal for help, especially if it be something he likes to do.

On the other hand, it is sometimes best to avoid a man's strong points. It is often true that a man's weakness is found in the excessive indulgence of a strong quality. For instance, a strong will is sometimes betrayed into stubbornness, or fine intellectuality yields to the temptation to argue. In such cases it is wise to avoid this point of his strength, and seek to touch his heart. And in all such cases the worker must study the individual in order to determine just how to deal with his strong points, by using them or eluding them. If he be a thorough-going, manly nature, appeal to his sincerity with intense earnestness. Challenge his constant fairness in the study of the subject, and in the consideration of his own real need and deepest desires. Let him realize that you expect much of his noblest manhood. Over against what weaknesses he may have, and in connection with the insistence that he constantly look to Christ for help, this appeal to the best in the man often proves a great factor in his uplifting. Moreover, the discovery of what one does well is the secret often of helping him to be victorious. (1 Sam. xvii. 38-40.)

Prayer.—Thou didst make the most of the abilities of Thy disciples, dear Master. Help me to learn to do this in my dealing with men.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.**SIXTH DAY: *His Degree of Faith.***

Whenever the individual to be won is willing to converse about his religious life, one rule of supreme importance must always be applied. Discover how much he believes. (John ix. 35-38.) Never encourage a rehearsal of doubts and difficulties. If he should insist upon urging these, give them fair consideration, but help him to see that his sure path to peace and growing strength is the path of increasing faith. Secure a confession as to all he does believe. (John xi. 25-27.) He will probably be surprised to discover that he has so much faith. Bismarck once said: "Tell me what you believe: I have doubts enough of my own." The same human nature is in every man. The very study and emphasis of what we do believe is sure to strengthen our faith.

In discovering the faith of an individual, do not simply ask him to tell you how much he believes, but help him to realize it. (John xx. 30, 31.) A young man once asked how he could learn to believe. The answer was to begin with something he could not doubt. He thought that would be hard to find. "You cannot doubt that character is the most important thing in this world." Thoughtfully he declared he did believe that. "You cannot doubt that the character of Christ is the most perfect character known to men." After a moment's thought he admitted it. "You cannot doubt that Christ's character is the incarnation of His own teaching. He lived His teaching." Again he slowly admitted it. "Well, you believe a great deal. Your feet are on a rock. Keep right there, and realize that as it is because Christ's teachings lived in His life explain Christ, so His teachings lived in your life will make you to become like Him." He was astonished. He determined to begin the study of Christ's teachings with this in view. Within a few years he was a Sunday-school teacher.

Prayer.—Help me to love light rather than darkness, divine Teacher. I believe: help Thou mine unbelief. Help me to live true to what I do believe.

STUDY XI—The Individual to be Won.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

All of these studies are suggestive, and do not assume to be exhaustive. Only these more common elements in the character and conditions of men have been touched upon. The earnest and watchful Christian will note other facts to be considered in different individuals. The spirit of the work will obtain in all cases.

1. Why is it necessary to know the individual before assuming to discuss the subject of personal religion with him? How would you define temperament? How does James iii. involve temperament in its discussion? Why does one's own temperament need to be studied?

2. Why is it important to know the circumstances of the individual to be won? Suggest how different circumstances would call for different treatment by the Christian. How is one to learn of these circumstances?

3. What is the explanation of the evil influence of one who is not a Christian, as suggested by Paul and by our Lord in John iii.? What distinction is to be made between associates and companions? How should a Christian deal with evil companions?

4. Why is one vulnerable point fatal to the character? What is the force of Paul's plea to the Ephesians? What are some of the common points of weakness in our lives? What is the one great truth to urge upon such individuals? What two essentials are always to be urged upon one who has not accepted Christ?

5. How should we deal with the strong points of a friend whom we wish to win to Christ? When should we avoid one's strong points? How should we usually deal with a manly nature?

6. Why is it helpful to emphasize the importance of a man's faith, rather than to attempt to deal with his doubts? Repeat the experience of the individual given in the reading.

Prayer.—Thou didst suit the word or deed to the need of the individual, O Lord. Help me to learn to be wise in like manner.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.

FIRST DAY: *Prepare for the Particular Individual.*

The Christian worker is not yet ready to speak for Christ, though all the preparations thus far suggested may have been carefully and prayerfully observed. There is a special preparation to be made for the approach to the particular individual. There should be a personal preparation of prayer and emphasis of responsibility. As a rule, the individual to be won is not suddenly approached. No Christian should assume to go to a friend to speak for Christ without doing two things: first, seeking a special blessing for the particular effort (*Neh. ii. 4-8*); second, taking upon the heart the burden of the individual to be won. (*2 Kings v. 2, 3*.) Even if the opportunity be suddenly faced, no word should be spoken without a silent prayer for help, a moment's thoughtful appreciation of the momentous issues at stake, and a purpose to be Christ-like in spirit and earnest in the effort. Paul's personal preparation recorded in *Galatians i. 15-17* explains much of the power in his life-work.

Who can doubt that many an effort is ineffective because no such personal preparation has been sought in the particular case? It is just this which gives a power to the worker which every man feels, though he may not understand it. There is more of persuasion in the voice when this spirit is back of the word spoken than can ever be secured in any other way. There is an earnest intensity of soul which throbs in the entire expression of the worker which carries conviction to the heart of many a man. Let men believe that Christianity is to you the most real of all realities, and there will be a power in your words greater than that which comes from skilful argument. Cultivating His prayer-life was the secret of Christ's power, both with God and men. Have you been accustomed to prepare thus before speaking to an individual for Christ?

Prayer.—Divine Master, let me not suppose that Thou canst use me except as I seek to be fully prepared for Thy service.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.**SECOND DAY: Begin with a Confession.**

Any intimation of a feeling of superiority on the part of a Christian is fatal to his influence with one who is not, especially in view of the fact that any such spirit is always unjustifiable. To go with a confession of unworthiness is not only consistent, but it tends to disarm criticism. (Gen. xli. 15, 16.) Many a young man feels, with reason, that he is as good as some professing Christians whom he knows. He is likely to grow into a feeling of this sort about Christians in general. He does not realize how a true Christian, though weak and careless, may have much of reality in a spiritual experience which the world cannot see. Alas that so many Christians do not witness for Christ so that men cannot fail to know that they are His followers! No Christian should be satisfied with less than this; but many are, and the non-Christian knows it. (2 Cor. v. 11-21.)

Hence, when approaching him, it is always safest and generally helpful to begin by confessing one's own sense of unworthiness, and then add a confession of faith and hope in Christ as one who is most precious and helpful to you, and therefore to all who will accept Him. A young man once wrote the following letter to his school-friend: "Dear Bob—I have hesitated to speak to you about confessing Christ because I do not feel worthy to do so. Often I have felt that you are a better boy than I. And yet I am sure that you would have a precious blessing if you would confess Christ openly. I believe you are a Christian at heart, and I know you would rejoice in your experience if you should give open allegiance to your Saviour. Will you not think and pray about it? I pray that you may be led to take this step, and become a strong Christian. Truly yours." The letter was sent in prayer. The young man soon confessed Christ.

Prayer.—Empty me of any sense of self-sufficiency, blessed Master. Help me ever to remember my own unworthiness as I strive to help others.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.

THIRD DAY: *Emphasize the Positive Side.*

In the previous Study we noted the value of emphasizing the importance of an individual's faith, rather than attempting to consider his various doubts. One can have doubts forever by the cultivation of the negative side of any subject. Faith means trusting when knowledge is not complete, and cannot be. It is vital to reasonable faith to have an inquirer realize that human faculties are finite, that men do not fully comprehend the very simplest and most familiar facts of every-day life. On the other hand, no mystery baffles the human mind which is not touched by a plain fact. There are two ways of approaching the study of anything. One is to begin with the fact, make the most of the fact, follow along the line of the fact, and wait for more light. (John ix. 25.) The other way is to insist upon comprehending the mystery before accepting the fact and enjoying the blessings which the fact may bring. The first method is scientific, reasonable. The second is unscientific, fruitless, unreasonable. In every department of knowledge men adopt the first of these methods, if they ever advance. (Read Matt. vii. 16-20.)

Therefore the Christian must make this principle plain, and must emphasize its reasonable demand. Let the inquirer see that the best way to overcome and dispose of his doubts is to build on the facts which are the true basis of a reasonable, working faith. Along this line every man will grow strong, and only by this method. Of course, at times, certain doubts and questions must be considered, but the positive constructive method of building up a clear, strong faith in Christ is the only sure cure for an unbelieving man. Draw upon the facts of Christianity, the evident truth of the Gospel, the fruits of genuine Christian service, and like facts of such character as to justify hearty and confident faith.

Prayer.—Thou didst make plain the way by living the truth. Help me to realize the constructive force of this fact, and give me wisdom in helping men to see it.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.

FOURTH DAY: *Agree as Far as Possible.*

Not many people are all wrong. “Total depravity” is a term much misunderstood. It never meant that a man was all depraved, but that every part of the totality of his nature was affected by sin. One of the illuminating passages upon the subject of method of Christian work is that in Acts xvii. 22-31. Here Paul addresses the Athenians with evident intention to find as much common ground with them as possible. Instead of declaring them to be “too superstitious,” he compliments them, as the R. V. shows, as being “very religious.” Later he quotes one of their own poets as voicing the truth which he is presenting at that point. Yet there are those who are not ready to see any truth in the teachings of Confucius or Buddha when carrying the Gospel to their followers. They lose much by failing to adopt Paul’s method.

This principle is exactly consistent with the suggestion that we emphasize faith rather than doubts. Always make the most of a man’s faith. Always try to see all that is hopeful in his view. Point out that his position, at the point where he admits any part of the truth, is the one to dwell upon, in order that progress may be made at that point toward a fuller and clearer appreciation of the truth. If non-essential matters arise for discussion, as they will, urge that they be set aside for the time, without entering into their discussion. For the other side of this principle is to avoid disagreement, when it can be avoided, especially if it be about some secondary matter. When we push the claims of the truth along the lines of the largest facts of sin and character and destiny, and the need of a Saviour, in the very nature of the truth considered, there is less ground for disagreement, and therefore a better prospect for winning the individual to conviction and acceptance of duty.

Prayer.—Give me a clear vision of the truth, O Spirit of God, promised to guide me into all truth. May I be willing to see the good wherever found.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.**FIFTH DAY: *Make No Compromise with Truth.***

To agree with truth whenever it is found is not to be confounded with admitting error. Paul told those Athenians wherein the Gospel he preached condemned their false faith and idolatrous practices. Moreover, when a vital principle was involved, Paul withheld Peter to his face at Antioch. (Gal. ii. 11-16.) Some thought the half-hearted sort of Christian who divided his allegiance to Christ with his old allegiance to Judaism was good enough. But Paul saw that such Christianity would soon lose its vitality and power. Here is the fundamental fact which must always be remembered when one is tempted to be satisfied with an attitude toward Christ which is not thorough-going. For the sake of the man who is to be won to Christ the Evangelical Christian dare not consent to a conception of Christianity which is not in accord with the world-wide faith of Protestantism. (John iii. 1-3.) Nothing else will abide or suffice for the individual or the race.

There are phases of the truth claiming to be Christian, but lacking some vital essential to the faith, which will one day prove it to be insufficient. To many its adherents seem to be all and to have all that any Christian is or has. But in all of them something is lacking from full recognition of the person and work of Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient Saviour of men. Most clearly the history of the faith has proven that when Christ has not been given full recognition, the compromise with truth has been fatal. Hence in dealing with the individual, the full claim of Jesus Christ for a complete trust and full allegiance must be urged. This does not mean that all details of a creed must be accepted, but it does involve the vital essentials of the Evangelical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer.—Help me fully to realize that “there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,” and give me wisdom to be able to help others to see this vital truth clearly and gladly.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.**SIXTH DAY: Use God's Word to Meet Special Points.**

Christ's practice of this principle is the familiar fact in the Gospel record. His followers should learn to use the Word of God as He used it. In urging His claim to be the Christ, He quoted the words of David (Ps. cx. 1), and emphasized the fact that David spoke by the Holy Ghost. (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) David was their great hero and national idol. This appeal was final. Hence we read, "the common people heard Him gladly." (Mark xii. 35-37.) Again, when the lawyer questioned Him as to how to inherit eternal life (Luke x. 25-28), He did not simply bring the Scriptures for His answer, but put the question to the lawyer himself as to the teaching. This is often effective. Have the inquirer give the Scripture, or, if he should not know it, find it and request him to read it for himself.

Christ knew His Bible. The Christian worker must also know this book. (Heb. iv. 12.) In His temptation Christ knew the Scriptures from point to point which met the tempter's words. (Matt. iv. 1-11.) We see here how the Christian must be ready to use the Word. Even the devil will quote Scripture, or misquote it, and if any man do the same we must be ready to put the truth over against the misquotation or the false application of the text. Especially when one is ready to accept the Bible as authority is this method to be used vigorously. Many will tell you they have no trouble about the Bible, but do not see this or that teaching therein; or they may be resting upon certain texts which they imagine will justify their position. A young lawyer, who thought himself thoroughly candid, said he could see no reasonableness in the Scriptures. He was told that Paul had described him in 1 Corinthians ii. 14. In surprise, he decided to read this entire epistle. He admired Paul. God will use the message.

Prayer.—Thou hast taught us to search the Scriptures, dear Master. May we do this, both because of the life they bring to us, and that we may help others.

STUDY XII—Principles of Procedure.**SEVENTH DAY: Suggestions for the Class.**

These six principles suggested are among the most important to be applied by the Christian worker. More vital than the method is the earnestness of spirit. A trellis is helpful to a vine, but a living vine will grow without a trellis. Having both we get the best fruit.

1. What preparation should be made by the Christian worker in connection with the plan to approach a particular individual? Why? How does it give peculiar power to the worker? Have you prepared thus?

2. Why is it unwise to show any sense of superiority in approaching one who is not a Christian? How do such people feel about most Christians? What kind of a confession is becoming in a Christian? Give the point to be noted in the incident of the letter.

3. Why is it important to emphasize the positive side in the discussion? What are the two ways of approaching the study of anything? What makes the Christian's faith reasonable? What are the main facts to be emphasized in striving to strengthen one's faith?

4. State the substance of Paul's argument before the Athenians. Why did Paul seek to agree with them as far as he could? How should Christians deal with heathen and pagan believers?

5. What was the point of difference between Paul and Peter at Antioch? Why was it so important as to justify Paul's unwillingness to compromise the truth? What is the great truth which is most vital to the Christian faith? What teachings to-day compromise this truth? (General answer.)

6. What was Christ's practice in regard to the use of the Bible in dealing with men? How did He strengthen His claim to be the Messiah? How did He deal with the lawyer? How did He meet temptations? What is the evidence that Christ knew His Bible?

Prayer.—Help me to learn what Paul meant when he said he was all things to all men, if by any means he might win some.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.**FIRST DAY: *Not Always the First Book to Use.***

When Paul preached to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 22-31), he did not at first refer to the Scriptures, from which he always argued in preaching to the Jews. He knew the Hebrew Scriptures would have no authoritative significance to the Greeks. The only book to which Paul appealed was a book of Greek poetry which set forth the truth in such a way as to appeal to the Greeks more than Moses or Isaiah would have done. In this Paul showed no lack of confidence in the Word of God. He knew the "carnal mind is enmity against God," and that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) There are those who have, by various means, come to have a prejudice against the Bible, or against Christianity in general. For many of these it will be better to use some other book as a preparation for them to study the Bible later.

For instance, a young man recently asserted his conviction that Christ was the best man who ever lived, but he refused to believe in the supernatural in revelation and life. Without attempting to argue that Christ could not have been a mere man, if He be counted the best of men, because His claim must then be admitted as true, the young man was given a copy of Yonge's "Christ of History." In that book the very point of view which the young man held is taken. The author begins with Christ as a man, and rises step by step to the argument that any man who lived the life of Christ must have been more than a man. The presentation is concise, clear, forcible. While reading it, the young man must take the whole argument without interruption, and God will use the truth there as surely as in the Bible, to which the young man will turn later with new interest.

Prayer.—Help me to prepare the way for Thee, O Christ, in whatever manner may seem to promise the best result. Then I can bring men who are interested to Thy Word of truth, to which they will more readily respond.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.

SECOND DAY: *Relative Authority of the Old and New Testaments.*

Most important to the defence of the truth is a clear understanding regarding the authority of the Scriptures, especially the distinction to be made between the authority of the Old Testament and that of the New. Unbelievers are continually attacking certain portions of the Old Testament, as containing standards of life quite unworthy of the God of righteousness. Two things must be clear at this point. First, the fact of a progressive revelation of God's will; and, second, the fact that Christ Himself set aside those Old Testament laws which are superseded by the Gospel and the New Testament. In Mark x. our Lord states that the Mosaic law allowing divorce was not the final expression of the will of God, but was on a lower level because of the hardness of the hearts of the people. In the sermon on the Mount, Christ said (Matt. v. 43): "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. (Deut. xviii. 6 and Ps. xli. 10.) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you," etc.

Paul, in his sermon at Athens, had this same truth in mind when he said (Acts xvii. 30): "And the times of this ignorance God winked at," etc. Canon Mozley states the case thus: "A religion from God must be revealed progressively. If it had been at once proclaimed in its higher and purer form, men in their moral darkness and degradation could not have received it. It must come to them through their own moral atmosphere, modified by its confusion on all ethical questions. It could only be apprehended gradually. By degrees it will elevate the standard, and lift the race to a higher plane." To this higher plane Christ lifts men. The aim and end of a progressive revelation justifies it. If these facts be clear, the difficulty on this point will disappear.

Prayer.—O Spirit promised to guide into all truth, help me clearly to see the truth and to be able to vindicate its authority to men.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.**THIRD DAY: *The Place of Miracles.***

To many minds the most difficult fact to understand is the place of miracles in God's dealings with men. When we turn to the Old Testament it is very important to remember the actual condition of the masses of the people. They were ignorant and undisciplined. Only a few could read, and the multitude received the truth from these few. Now all revelation must be accommodated to the limitations of the people to be instructed. Modern pedagogy emphasizes the value of the object-lesson for the child. This was the very method God used in teaching men. The miracle was intended to illuminate the truth rather than to prove it.

The purpose of the miracle was to authenticate the messenger of Jehovah by such manifestation of power, in connection with his message, as to convince the people that Jehovah was a mightier God than their gods. Thus in the mission of Moses, the plagues smote Egyptian gods one after another, until this one great truth convinced both Israel and Egypt, that Jehovah's power was supreme. (Ex. iii. 19, 20.) So in the test of fire at Mt. Carmel, the significance of the challenge was in the fact that Baal was the sun-god. The god of Nineveh was Dagon the fish-god. Whether Jonah be history or parable, the same purpose appeared. It must be made clear that Jehovah is greater than Dagon.

Turning to the New Testament, we find Christ (John xix. 10, 11) emphasizing the place of miracles, but suggesting (John xx. 29) that the day would come when men would not need the object-lesson, as they did in the past. But because we are past the kindergarten we must not forget the children in the earlier grades of the school. Modern science teaches the immanence of God in all life. He was in the early life of the race in miracle, teaching men by it concerning His truth and power.

Prayer.—For the manifestation of Thy power and love, we thank Thee, O God. May we know the blessedness of those who now believe without seeing as of old.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.**FOURTH DAY: *Questions About Discrepancies.***

There are several hundreds of manuscripts of the Scriptures, and no two of them are exactly alike. The differences are never important. All agree in the record of vital truth. This means that God was not concerned to preserve the Bible from the marks of human imperfections. In the transmission of the records copyists and teachers have added marginal notes, which later copyists have worked into the text. The discovery of earlier manuscripts proved this. God has used fallible men to give us infallible truth in the setting of human limitations. The infallible truth is not lost thereby. Perhaps the original manuscripts were free from error, but it is not essential that they should have been. The Bible as it is proves sufficient for God's purpose. It is very suggestive that New Testament writers generally are not careful to quote Old Testament passages verbatim. It is the spirit of the truth which giveth life.

When dealing with objectors, admit frankly that there are some minor discrepancies in the record. But the vital truth abides. Moreover, it is to be noted that many alleged discrepancies are easily explained, when all the facts are reasonably considered. One of the most famous cases is that in the record of David's purchase of the place for the temple. Some urge that the account in 2 Samuel xxiv. 24 contradicts the account in 1 Chronicles xxi. 22-25. But it is evident that both accounts harmonize perfectly. Ornan wished to sell the land to David, but to give the oxen, wheat, etc. But David insisted on paying for everything, and paid six hundred shekels in gold for the land, and fifty shekels in silver for the oxen, wheat, etc. As to the Gospel records, the slight differences in detail greatly strengthen the evidence of independent witnesses.

Prayer.—Help me to be more anxious about the spirit that giveth life, dear Lord, and help all men to see the truth which makes their duty plain.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.**FIFTH DAY: *The Sufficiency of the Bible.***

The position of the Christian is much stronger when he acknowledges frankly every fact about the Bible which may be adduced by way of objection. There is an explanation for every such fact which properly relates it to the whole Bible. When such facts have been considered, the Bible remains the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life for men. Coleridge said: "I know the Bible is inspired because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book." Dr. Robertson Smith said: "History has not taught us that there is anything in true religion to add to the New Testament." It opens a fountain of healing for every human ill, strength for the weary spirit, divine sympathy for the sorrowing, precious comfort for the bereaved, and a glorious hope for the life everlasting. (Ps. xix.)

This Bible brings the salvation of God to sinful men through the atoning love of Jesus Christ. It has touched the world's life with transforming power. It has set the child in the very centre of human interests. It found slavery rendered intolerable by the cruelty and impurity of the master, and not only lifted up the slave to freedom, but exalted the place of labor as honorable in all men. It consecrated the unknown institution of marriage as honorable and blessed. Where the Bible has its place, righteousness is exalted as the mark of true character, and the only measure of real success in human life, while the unselfish service of a Christ-like love is the sign of God's fellowship with men. The light of a blessed immortality shines from its pages upon the way everlasting. It proves sufficient for the loftiest ambition, the deepest aspiration of the noblest men of the ages. It is the bread of life for every man who hungers after righteousness. Let every inquirer ponder these plain, priceless facts.

Prayer.—O Word of God incarnate, help me to appreciate more clearly and appropriate more fully Thy written Word. May it dwell in me richly, the man of my council, the lamp to my feet day by day.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.**SIXTH DAY: *The Final Authority of Christ.***

A study of Christ's teaching reveals the final element of authority not only in His utterances, but in the entire Bible. The reason it retains its sufficiency for men, notwithstanding its imperfections in progressive revelation and its discrepancies in human record, is found in the character of its authority. This is especially apparent in the teaching of Christ. Whenever Christ referred to the Old Testament as authoritative, He referred to the spiritual teachings as having the abiding sanction of God. (Note Luke xxiv. 27.) The message of the Bible is not primarily regarding any phase of science or history. These are incidental. Therefore it is that all minor details in the record do not affect the increasing power of the Bible among men.

Christ's insistence upon His message is at the point where it illuminates spiritual realities. Here He purposed that it should reveal its power as the eternal truth of God. (John iii. 11-21.) Here He unfolded the fundamental principles underlying man's right relation to God and to his fellow-men, largely leaving the details of the application of those principles to the individual soul. Here the authority of Christ is supreme, infallible, and eternal. Let no man assume to claim authority for Christ where Christ did not assert it for Himself, and thus detract from the clear-shining glory of His power as the living Word of God. His work was the fundamental work of giving men to see the truth of God as it shines upon the way everlasting. All that men need to make the path of duty plain for this life is given, as well as all that is needed for our eternal hope. The duty and the privilege of every man is to accept Christ as Lord and Master in the purpose to strive to do His will and help others to see that in Him we have life, and have it more abundantly.

Prayer.—Lord, where else shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thy words are spirit and life to men. Help me to know the truth as it is in Thee.

STUDY XIII—Using the Bible with Men.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

Let the Christian worker be thoroughly clear regarding its exact character and he will not be unprepared to defend it as the revelation of God and of His will which is necessary to man's salvation from sin. Any artificial theory which does not take every fact into account will weaken your position in using the Bible with men. When the spiritual reality is set forth as the unfailing fact in the Scripture teaching there is no possible escape from its abiding authority and rich sufficiency.

1. Why is it not always best to give the Bible to men who are approached by a Christian worker? How did Paul do in Athens? Give the account of the young man to whom Yonge's "Christ of History" was given.

2. What part of the Scriptures do unbelievers generally attack? What two facts must be clearly understood? What did Paul say about this subject at Athens? What is the substance of Canon Mozley's statement?

3. What was the condition of the people generally in Bible times? Why was the miracle often the best way to teach men? What was the purpose of the miracle? Illustrate in the case of Moses, Elijah, and Jonah. What does Christ teach regarding miracles?

4. Wherein do the manuscripts of the Bible agree? Wherein do they differ? Why do the discrepancies not affect the truth of the Bible? What are the facts about the copyists? What of the accounts of David?

5. Why are all the facts about the Bible to be frankly admitted? What did Coleridge say about the inspiration of the Bible? Give some of the facts mentioned to show what blessings have followed the Bible in the earth.

6. Why does the Bible retain its efficiency, notwithstanding its discrepancies? What parts of the Old Testament abide as giving us the truth? Wherein does the authority of Christ's teaching rest?

Prayer.—Let Thy teaching be the supreme truth to me, O Lord. Help me to seek to know Thy will, and to strive daily to do it faithfully.

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**FIRST DAY: *The Individual Conscience.***

We have come to a most serious problem. Perhaps the Christian himself needs this Study as much as the non-Christian. No one can ponder the alarming increase of the spirit of worldliness in the Church of Christ without realizing that before it can do the work which the Master has set it to do a new era of self-denial must dawn. The atmosphere of the discussion is so illusive, and the temptations involved are so subtle, that the earnest Christian may well seek the guidance of God in striving to deal with it wisely. There are tokens of a quickening of the spiritual life at certain points in the Church, but there are also tokens of a compromise with real spirituality. The Christian must never be a hopeless pessimist, nor must he be a blind optimist.

The first requisite to a better day is a profound concern on the part of each individual Christian about his own life. (Acts xxiv. 16.) How is it counting for the truest interests of the Kingdom? What is its tendency in this age of commercialism and pleasure? (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) Is it your aspiration to have more of worldly enjoyment, or to be able to give more of time and strength and money to the cause of Christ? Are you really concerned about the worldliness which is in the Church? Are you ready for self-denial for the sake of Christ and your neighbors? These are the questions for the Christian to ponder. But in answering them one must go into the life and death struggle of the soul. Very few Christians have done this. Very few are willing to do it; but it must be done before the Church can ever take on the power of God and win the world to Christ. When this is done the problem of the compromise with worldliness will be solved. Then Christians will be known. Read Isaiah vi. 1-8.

Prayer.—Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me. Nor should I aught withhold, dear Lord, from Thee. In love my soul would bow, my heart fulfil its vow. Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee!

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**SECOND DAY: *Allegiance to Christ First.***

While we must not minimize the seriousness of the problem involved in this Study, we must frankly face the fact that the mistake has often been made of exalting unduly a few particular amusements by making a direct issue between them and the public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. A young man once voluntarily expressed the desire to unite with the Church. After making a good confession, he said he wished to ask if the officers felt it would be wrong for him to continue to play whist after uniting with the Church. He was asked if there was any issue in his own mind between Christ and cards. "Oh, no," he replied, "if it be wrong, I will not play cards again. But I do not think it would be wrong."

The pastor at once advised that, since the young man was ready to give Christ the first place, it would be better to settle for himself the question of any amusement, with the purpose to be true to his conscience, as he received light. To this all agreed, and the question of cards was left to his individual conscience. A few days later one of the officers of the Church questioned the young man's fitness to be received into the Church. He said: "You know we must be born again." The pastor replied: "But that does not mean to be a full-grown Christian. To be born again is to be a babe in Christ, and have the new life principle implanted in the heart. Not one of us doubts that this young man has had that experience. The very purpose of the Church is to help him to grow into a larger life in Christ. Nothing else will help him so much." He agreed. That young man became an earnest Christian. Cards soon fell out of his life. He settled his allegiance to Christ first, and other things became secondary. Read 2 Corinthians v. 14-17 and Acts viii. 36, 37.

Prayer.—Let me make Thee my Lord in very truth. Then I shall soon learn to desire only that which will be pleasing to Thee.

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**THIRD DAY: *The Help Confession Brings.***

The principle which we are emphasizing is that involved in the old familiar phrase—"the expulsive power of a new affection." The only way to break the slavery of sin is to make Christ our Master, and begin a new obedience with all the earnestness of which we are capable. Especially is this true when one's struggle is at the point where he hesitates to confess Christ because his enjoyment of questionable amusements would be affected. When such a struggle involves the young man who is concerned about his spiritual life, but who desires also to surrender nothing of his earthly pleasures, then the great duty to urge is that of showing his true colors. (Ex. xxxii. 26.) It is not the prerogative of a Christian to insist that these pleasures are sinful in themselves. But it is wise and right to urge the hesitant believer to be thorough-going in his allegiance, and be true to Christ, in the purpose that all his pleasures henceforth must be consistent with an earnest Christian life. (Phil. iv. 8.)

The open confession of Christ brings strength to such a follower. No strength of character can be developed without a definite purpose. A life with a purpose is like an arrow flying to the mark, while the life without a purpose is like a drifting ship. Now, in order to have a purpose in the Christian life, there must be a definite standard fixed as the goal toward which one is striving. A genuine confession of Christ secures this. It carries the positive purpose to seek to do Christ's will. This is vital to Christian character. This purifies the motive, clarifies the thought, intensifies the will, deepens the affections. Anything else leaves the life uncertain. When the confession is genuine, all other questions find solution. Read Matthew xvi. 13-18.

Prayer.—Reveal to me the force of Thy statement, O Christ, that if I confess Thee before men Thou wilt confess me before the Father, and help me to see why Thou canst not confess me, if I fail to confess Thee.

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**FOURTH DAY: *The Weak Brother's Conscience.***

Paul's discussion of this subject is the classic passage for all time. (1 Cor. viii.) Every sincere Christian should study it for his own inspiration, and should present it to any who are not clear about the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject to read for themselves. Note the fundamental points emphasized by Paul. The first great fact urged by the apostle is that Christian love is necessary in the heart if one wishes to settle this question so as to be most helpful to one's neighbor. We may have much knowledge about the question, so as to be very clear that we are not doing any wrong at all. But knowledge puffeth up, while love edifieth. Eating meat which had been offered to idols was quite an innocent thing. An idol was nothing. But the people had for years held up their meat by heave-offerings to the idols, thus recognizing the gods as their benefactors in giving them life and the blessings of life. Hence one who ate the meat thus offered was looked upon as an idolater.

When the new Christians at Corinth faced this question of conduct the difference of opinion was pronounced. The matter was referred to Paul. His masterly discussion leaves nothing more to be said. The Christians who persisted in eating meat were within their lawful rights, but their liberty was in danger of leading them to be stumbling-blocks in the way of those who were still weak. Should any weak brother be led to suppose that a Christian could also be an idolater, the result would be fatal to a true conception of a true Christian life. When a Christian knows this, his act, which was not sinful in itself, now becomes sinful, for it would be a wilful injury of a brother's soul. Paul would never run the risk of such a sin. Are you willing to do so?

Prayer.—Thou didst deny Thyself for me, dear Lord. Thou didst leave Thy glory to die for me. Help me to be glad to deny myself for Thee, and for every man for whose salvation Thou hast died.

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**FIFTH DAY: *Christian Example.***

When we considered man's responsibility for his fellow-men we noted the responsibility of example. We noted how every life is an argument, and how vital a consistent life is to an effective testimony for Christ. (Eph. v. 15.) That principle has a special application at the point where the very question most frequently arises as to what is consistent in conduct with a true Christian character. Paul's discussion carries the matter of revealing a true Christian example beyond the point of being consistent, in so far as the conduct of the individual may not be pronounced wrong. The moment we press the question of a standard of conduct here we realize that the Christ-like element in Christianity is not the letter of the law, but the spirit of love. While love always honors the law, it is never satisfied with the Shylock idea of a pound of flesh.

The heart of the truth is here. Christian example will never be what our Lord desires until we cease to ask what may be allowed along the line of questionable pleasures. Such inquiry always betrays the presence of a selfish spirit dominant which separates from Christ, instead of drawing us nearer to Him. Paul wrote to the Philippians (ii. 3-13) those wonderful words which describe the character of Christ's self-emptied service for us. Now and then an anxious Christian longs to break the shackles of custom, and live so that his example would be less compromising with the worldly spirit which he knows is not of Christ. He often feels helpless, for one life seems to be unable to count for anything. Yet just this is what every zealous Christian must do. Let him plan prayerfully and perseveringly to have his life count as fully as one can for an example so evidently earnest in the effort to live Christ that every man will know it. Such a life will have power and be a blessing.

Prayer.—Let Thy mind dwell in me, dear Lord. Help me to learn this wondrous lesson as Thy follower, and then to show others its beauty and power.

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.

SIXTH DAY: *Not How Little, but How Much?*

After all, it is not primarily our relation to our fellow-man which involves the supreme motive in solving these questions. It is our relation to Christ. It is as we love Christ that we will learn to love our neighbor. It is as we love Christ that we will love to be pure and blameless in our own lives, and therefore always helpful, and never hurtful, in our Christian example. It is as we love Christ and will not ask how little we can do as Christians that will satisfy our consciences, but our constant effort will be to discover how much we can do for Him. (Matt. v. 40-48.) Where this spirit is controlling the life, all the questions of conduct take care of themselves easily and quickly.

Now this spirit is actually seen in many lives. This is not an idealism which is beyond the attainment of the follower of Jesus Christ. He will have his struggles. He will feel the binding of the chains of custom all about him. But his heart will be toward Christ as the needle is toward the pole. It is never absolutely true very long at a time. Distractions swerve it on this side and on that, but its controlling principle holds it to the one point again and again, until it is evident to every observer that its allegiance is fixed. So is it with the true Christian. So long as he must struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, there will be distractions and swervings from perfect fidelity to Christ; but the controlling principle of the love of Christ will appear again and again, until no fair man will doubt that the allegiance of his soul is fixed in Jesus Christ. (Phil. iii. 12-14.) To live so that all men will know this should be the constant aspiration, the absorbing ambition, the unceasing prayer, the constant endeavor of every man who professes faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and his Lord.

Prayer.—Give me the ambition to be a Christian at my best and at my most, O Lord. Burn the spirit of compromise with the truest life out of my desires forever!

STUDY XIV—About Questionable Amusements.**SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.***

In this Study the essence of the whole thought is summed up in the words—live Christ. Let Christ be the pith of every thought, Christ the wing of every word, Christ the spring of every action, Christ the pole of the heart, Christ the goal of the life. Let the rule for each day be—to Christ in everything, from Christ to everything, face to face with Christ in everything. The problem will then be solved.

1. What is the fact regarding the prevalence of the spirit of worldliness in the Church? What is the first requisite to a better condition of things in this regard? What is your real attitude of heart toward the subject? Do you believe it is pleasing to Christ?

2. What mistake is sometimes made in discussing the subject of questionable amusements with people who are not Christians? State the points in the incident mentioned concerning a young man and the Church officers. Why was the officer mistaken in his idea of the case?

3. What principle is involved in the view which is being set forth in this Study? Why is it wise to urge positive allegiance to Christ, rather than to condemn the particular amusement? What are the benefits resulting from an open confession of faith in Christ?

4. Give the main points contained in Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians viii. What were the habits at Corinth which explain the discussion? Do you study your conduct in view of its effect upon weaker brethren?

5. Why does the truth about Christian example apply here? What is the Christ-like element in Christian conduct? What is Paul's thought in Phil. ii.?

6. What relation is the supreme factor in determining our concern about our fellow-men? Give the substance of the illustration of the needle in its relation to the pole. Is your relation to Christ like that?

Prayer.—For this I pray, divine Master, that I may be blameless in my conduct, having my speech with grace, seasoned with salt!

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

FIRST DAY: *The Honest Doubter.*

There are some men who are seeking the truth, but are hindered by doubts which they think are justified. Before attempting to take up these doubts, let the worker show the individual to be won that nothing will help to clear away his doubts like the appreciation on his part of the reasonableness of faith. (Acts xxvi. 7, 8.) If possible this must be had before particular points are raised. The difficulty with such men, as a rule, is that they think they must have demonstrations about mysteries which will entirely remove the mysteries. We have discussed the difficulties in the minds of many regarding the Bible. When these are removed the way is often clear for an appeal to take Christ at His word, and test His promise to help the earnest man. (Matt. xi. 25-30.)

It is vitally important to show the doubter that *his intellect is not the only organ of evidence to the soul.* Many make the mistake of supposing it is. But *I know my mother loves me, and I cannot prove it by logic.* This means that the affections are an organ of evidence. Not only so, but the will is also involved as an organ of evidence. When Christ said, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17), He touched this truth. Especially is this necessary when the relation is to be established of servant and Master between the individual and Christ. In the nature of things the Christian must be willing to submit his will to the will of Christ in order to prove the blessedness of the Christian life. Come unto me and learn of me, is the condition which Christ makes if we would find rest unto our souls. (Matt. xi. 28-30.) The most helpful and most satisfactory thing the honest doubter can do is to "come and see" that Christ will prove faithful to His promise. (Hosea vi. 3.)

Prayer.—Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief. Give me grace to make the most of my faith and the least of my doubts and fears. Help me to see that the way of faith is the way of strength and growth.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

SECOND DAY: *The Open Unbeliever.*

When the individual to be won pretends to be an open unbeliever, the first thing to do is to discover, if possible, how far he will be frank and straightforward in discussion. Put the question directly: Are you willing to talk about the subject, and to be thoroughly fair in the face of the facts? If he should be evasive (Luke x. 29), tell him it is impossible for him ever to see the light if he will not be fair and honest. Nothing will be more effective than to leave him for a time under the sense of not being fair in the face of truth. Have him read John iii. 19-21, and ask him if the reason given for not coming to the light applies in his case. Have him read Hebrew x. 28, 29. He may never have appreciated his true attitude before, but the fact that he knows that someone else appreciates it will tend to make it vivid to himself. So long as he maintains his attitude it is not worth while to attempt discussion. Becoming willing to have a fair talk will be half the battle.

Then begin, as in other cases, by having him state what he does believe. Help him in this by suggesting every-day facts which all accept, though mysterious. Urge the reasonableness of a faith which rests on facts. At first begin to show how the facts in Christ's life justify faith in Him as a guide for this life. Then show that the experience of the Christian is very real, justifying his faith in Christ's teaching about God and His relation to men. At this point the fact of sin must be faced, and the need of a Saviour emphasized, as in the first Study. Let the sense of sin be quickened, and the truth will accomplish its work. Press home the teaching of Romans vi. 23. Ask him to recall instances of the wages of sin, and also the evident blessedness of the life of one who follows Christ in sincerity. Pray constantly for the Spirit's help.

Prayer.—Open the blind eyes, O God. Touch the hardened hearts of self-deceived men, and let the sunshine of Thy love make plain to them the way of life.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

THIRD DAY: *The Man Who Argues.*

We have his picture in Luke x. 25-29. The words which describe his spirit are, "but he, willing to justify himself, said," etc. Such an attitude betrays a fatal lack. We think of intellectual pride as explaining the tendency to argument, but it is just this also which inclines one to justify himself. The case is the more pathetic because it is a sign of intellectual weakness. The sign of intellectual strength is humility of spirit in the face of so much that baffles all science and all philosophy. Socrates was one of the first to show that the wise man is quick to confess what he does not know. It is well to make this point clear to a man who always desires to argue. He generally desires to satisfy his conscience regarding his attitude of mind and heart.

In John ix. we have the story of the effort of the Pharisees to argue with the man born blind who had received his sight (13-38). It was perfectly evident that this man could see, but the Pharisees were not willing to admit that Jesus should have the credit of healing him, for then they could not escape the clear duty of accepting Him themselves. Just this situation exists to-day. Men cannot deny the facts which Christians urge regarding Christian lives and communities; but they argue against the explanation which would give the credit to Christ. They try to explain these facts in other ways. The Pharisees insisted that this man explain how he was healed. He acknowledged frankly that he could not; but he knew the blessed fact. A man who drinks water knows his thirst is quenched, though he may not explain it. This illustration is sufficient to answer the man who would have you deny a fact because you cannot explain it. Thus fix the reasonableness of faith, and proceed as in other cases.

Prayer.—O Thou who art just and can justify the ungodly, who will turn to Thee in repentance and faith, convict the self-righteous of their helplessness without Thee.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.**FOURTH DAY: *The Shallow Sceptic.***

Here is still another type of individual, whose difficulty is an attitude of indifference. In every case of unwillingness to acknowledge Christ there is some phase of unbelief, and this is due either to the failure to appreciate the real character of sin, or an unwillingness to attempt the fight of faith which involves the struggle against sin. The condition betrays a shallow nature whose scepticism will be indefinite because the individual has never been thoughtful about the realities of the spiritual life. Therefore the aim of the Christian must be to deepen the sense of the truth about man's need, as it is set forth in the First Study. Nothing else will avail to affect the shallowness of this sort of life. Have them read Hebrews ii. 1-4.

When the sense of need is quickened, the Second Study unfolds God's provision for the need. One weakness found in this class of persons is the short-sighted sentiment that God is too good to allow His children to suffer forever because of sin. Those who hold to this misconception about the Father's love need to see how untenable such an opinion is, so long as men do not repent of sin. (Luke xix. 41-44.) Imagine a pupil coming to his own father, who is his teacher, with his problem wrong, and his father saying: "It does not matter. I love you so much. We will let it pass." You would say he did not really love the child, and did not love mathematics. Nay, there could be no more mathematics. But when the problem of character is wrong, God's love cannot ignore the fact. The true teacher will say: "Just because I love you so much, we must make the problem right, and I am here to help you do it." If the pupil be unwilling to have the problem made right, the case is hopeless, although Love has provided the way.

Prayer.—Give to thoughtless men a sense of sin, and therefore of their great need of forgiveness and cleansing, O God. Help them to see how Thou canst only save those who are willing to turn to Thee.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

FIFTH DAY: *The Partially Persuaded.*

Probably every unbeliever is partially persuaded, if he would be thoroughly frank to confess it. But the various classes thus far considered in this Study are those who do not confess the real truth about themselves. There are some, however, who profess to be partially persuaded but are not satisfied regarding certain points in the Christian faith. It is probable that such people will be among the most difficult to win to Christ, for they generally are complacent. The young man who came to Christ asking how to inherit eternal life lacked only one thing. (Matt. xix. 16-22.) He was complacent in his sense of self-sufficiency, and was unwilling to yield the point that was necessary for him to have eternal life. The love of Christ for him did not avail so long as he was not willing to do the one thing not yet done. The one vulnerable point was fatal.

Again we urge the method of emphasizing the value of the positive side of life and building the faith upon what is believed. Dwell upon the thought that if one who claims to be partly persuaded will earnestly make the most of his faith, a larger faith is sure to result. In Hosea vi. 3 we read: "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." All progress in knowledge is made as men press along the line of facts already secured. It must be so in religious knowledge and experience. (Jer. xxix. 13.) To this class emphasize also the necessity of having the will in right relation to Christ's will. (John vii. 17.) Generally this class will not be ready to make this test, and make their excuse in the claim that they cannot comprehend certain points. Urge the claim of Christ that willing obedience is the surest means of knowing the truth, and challenge them to make the test. Insist that no one ever made this test sincerely without finding a precious blessing as a result.

Prayer.—Help all hesitant men to seek Thee with the whole heart, for then Thou hast promised that they shall surely find Thee.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

SIXTH DAY: *Earnestness Versus Argument.*

A Christian heard a neighbor use scoffing language about Christianity. Though he knew his neighbor was not a Christian, he had never suspected the godless spirit betrayed by this utterance. He became burdened for his neighbor's salvation. He knew the man was keen in intellect and much given to argument, and therefore felt it necessary to prepare himself thoroughly to combat his arguments. When he went, with fear and trembling, he was burdened with the sense of his great responsibility, and constant in prayer. But as he drew near to his neighbor's house all the intellectual preparation was forgotten, and the only words which he could utter were, "My dear friend, I am so concerned about your soul!" He stood for a moment clasping the hand of his friend, choking with sobs, and then silently turned away.

The unbeliever was astonished. As he watched the Christian depart, he said to himself, "I know that man to be sincere. If he has found Christianity to be so real to him that he is really concerned about my welfare, then there is something about Christianity which I have never appreciated." The evident earnestness of the genuine, sincere Christian had convinced the unbeliever of the reality of the Christian faith, as no argument ever would have done. An argument would have provoked his intellectual pride, whereas his heart was touched by the power of an earnest spirit. He was led to Christ. (Acts xx. 17-31.)

This does not mean that there is no place for an argument, but it is proof that often earnestness carries conviction because it reveals a genuine experience, and after all nothing tells like the evidence that a Christian thoroughly believes his own testimony because it has come from a true experience.

Prayer.—I pray for earnest sincerity, O God. Help me in my own experience to be dead in earnest about the great realities of the spiritual life. Then help me to witness to these realities with earnest zeal.

STUDY XV—Intellectual Questions.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

It is not always easy to distinguish between the intellectual and moral forces of the soul. The activities of the conscience involve both, and various theories differ as to the relative place of the intellect and the moral consciousness. Experience proves that the intellect has only a partial place, while the moral intuitions also are active in the perception of right and wrong, and therefore of truth and duty. Especially in the moral consciousness is the will an important factor, and love reveals itself in personal relations in its own way.

1. What rule applies especially when dealing with an honest doubter? What must we acknowledge about mysteries? What are the organs of evidence to the soul? What mistake is made regarding them?

2. What is the first thing to do with an open unbeliever? What Scripture is to be used if he be evasive? When he is frank, how would you proceed? When the fact of sin is faced, what Scripture is to be used?

3. Where is the picture of the man who argues? What is the fatal fact about him? What does intellectual pride indicate in the individual? Analyze the story in John ix., and show the reason for the argument of the Pharisees. What illustration justifies faith even when explanations cannot be fully given?

4. Why is the case of the shallow sceptic difficult? What truth does he need to realize? How would you answer the misconception about God's love?

5. How should you deal with the partially persuaded? What Scripture is to be used with them? How must the will be involved in the knowledge of Christ?

6. What is the incident given to illustrate the importance of earnestness? Why is this valuable? What activities enter into the moral consciousness? (See this page, introduction.)

Prayer.—May I learn to know the truth in increasing fulness, O Lord, and may the evident realities in my experience appear to those who know me.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

FIRST DAY: *Believing, but Not Confessing.*

We read in the account of the early Church that there were many of the chief rulers who believed on Christ (John xii. 42), but “did not confess Him.” John gives the reason. There are many secret believers who will not admit that this same explanation applies to their failure to confess Christ, but for most men there is reason to believe the same explanation obtains. When a man claims to believe in Christ and to be His follower, but declines to confess Him openly before men, the reason is to be found in his relations with men, as contrasted with his relation to God. If he loved to do the will of God he could not fail to realize that the spirit as well as the letter of the New Testament Scriptures emphasize open confession on the part of the believer as required by the Lord.

Furthermore, this public confession is identified with the allegiance of the believer to the Church of Christ. In Acts ii. 41-47 the teaching is clear that the believers who confessed the new faith were “added to the Church” day by day. Paul in his letter to the Romans (x. 8-11) not only assumes that the believer will “not be ashamed” to confess his Lord, but insists that he will be thus loyal. When Christ charged His disciples to be His witnesses (Acts i. 8), it is perfectly evident that He expected them to confess Him with the mouth, as Paul puts it. A witness is not simply one who believes something, but one who tells it. Christ is on trial before men, and He looks to everyone of His followers to be true to Him and His cause, which is at stake in the world. Thorough-going allegiance to Christ involves hearty, open assertion of loyalty to Him as King and Lord. Let such considerations as these be urged upon those who profess to believe, but have not confessed Him as Lord and Master.

Prayer.—As I value Thy friendship and saving help, so may I be glad to prove my fullest allegiance to Thee, dear Lord. Help men to love Thee best, and seek to do Thy will.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

SECOND DAY: *Those Who Think Public Confession Unnecessary.*

In spite of the clear teaching of the New Testament regarding the natural duty of the believer to confess Christ, there are those who claim that they can be true Christians without doing this, and that open confession on the part of the believer is not necessary. To such people the idea of salvation is largely that of transportation to heaven when they die. No; salvation involves transformation of character. But this is impossible, except where the heart-life is changed, the inner spirit of the man renewed, and the principle of personal allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ is quickened in the soul. The man who fails to appreciate this much about salvation has failed at the vital point. He may have all the graces and manner of a Christian gentleman, but if in his heart there be no spirit of personal allegiance to Christ, he is not being transformed in the realities of the spiritual life which make a true character.

It was with this supreme truth in His thought that Christ spake as He did regarding the necessity of confessing Him. (Matt. x. 32, 33.) It is to be noted that this statement is connected with the assertion that God notes the very hairs of our heads. Christ touches the heart of the matter in His words in Mark viii. 34-38. It is not an arbitrary statement, but simply the emphasis of the fact that the real character of a man's allegiance to Christ will appear in his open attitude toward Him, and that is not so important in its effect upon Christ as it is in its evidence of the real heart-life of the man who professes to be His follower, but refuses Him full allegiance. The inability of Christ at the last to recognize such as His own is not because of His lack of love, but because of the lack in the man's heart which separated him from the true Christ-life.

Prayer.—I pray that I may be so truly Thine, O Christ, that Thou wilt gladly confess me before the Father, and welcome me to Thy joy.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

THIRD DAY: *Those Who Wait for Some Wonderful Experience.*

There are secret believers who are willing to confess Christ, but suppose they cannot honestly do so because they have wrong ideas about that which is necessary to an acceptable and sincere confession. Their misapprehension is due to a mistaken idea about the experience which accompanies conversion. They have heard the testimony of some Christians regarding their experience, and they suppose every Christian must have the same sort of experience. But no two Christians are alike, and no two experiences at conversion are alike. It is true the experience of Paul was sudden and wonderful (Acts ix. 1-9), but that of John and Andrew was very quiet and undemonstrative, yet just as effective. The character of this experience when normal is described by our Lord in Mark iv. 26-28. Many a person never knows the precise moment of his conversion.

“ When, passing southward, I may cross the line
 Between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans,
 I may not tell by any tests of mine,
 By any startling signs or strange commotions
 Across my track.
 But if the days grow sweeter one by one,
 And e'en the icebergs melt their hardened faces,
 And sailors linger, basking in the sun,
 I know I must have made the change of places
 Some distance back.

When, answering timidly the Master's call,
 I passed the bourne of life in coming to Him,
 When, in my love for Him, I gave up all,
 The very moment when I thought I knew Him,
 I cannot tell.
 But as unceasingly I feel His love,
 And this cold heart is melted to o'erflowing,
 As now, so clear, the light comes from above,
 I wonder at the change, bat move on, knowing
 That all is well.”

The man who trusts in Christ needs only to take Him at His word in Matthew xi. 28, John vi. 37, and Matt. x. 32.

Prayer.—I thank Thee, O Lord, that the way is made plain, and Thine invitation is clear and for all.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

FOURTH DAY: *Those Whose Associates Influence Them Away.*

The general reason given in John xii. 42, 43 for the failure to confess Christ has special application to that class of believers who hesitate to give open allegiance to Him because of the influence of their associates. We have discussed in a former Study the importance of having companions who will be helpful to the Christian, and therefore the importance of fixing clearly the purpose to do two things: first, to decide for Christ so positively that your companions can have no doubt about your sincerity; and, second, to strive to win these companions to Christ. If they are not willing to listen to the pleading of an old friend, then the duty is clear to cut away from them and form new companions among Christians. There is no other course worthy of a Christian. But while this course is clearly the right one, it is too thorough-going for many whose hope in Christ is full of the alloy of desire to cling to the friendships and pleasures of the earthly life.

The words of Christ in Matt. x. 37-39 are not to be considered an arbitrary utterance. They do not, for an instant, involve the forsaking of loved ones for Christ, but they do warn against choosing between loved ones and Christ. Any man who has realized the needs of men, as suggested in Study I, cannot continue for very long in companionship with those who have no concern about their needs without witnessing for the truth. If he be complacent in such company without bearing witness to his faith, he has betrayed a serious lack in the quality of that faith. Otherwise his silence would be impossible. The fact must be emphasized that when one professes faith in Christ without giving any evidence of that faith he is in danger of being self-deceived.

Prayer.—Let me not suppose that I can be Thy disciple, O Christ, without my cross. Help me to be true to Thee, and whatever cross that allegiance may bring, help me to bear bravely to the end.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.**FIFTH DAY: Those Who Fear Their Inconsistencies May Hinder.**

There are some conscientious people who have such a high idea of the true Christian life that they hesitate to confess Christ openly in the fear that their inconsistencies may cause their influence to be more hurtful than helpful. The palpable inconsistencies of so many Christians will often deter such from taking the step. Most earnestly should the Christian strive to help such friends as these. Emphasize the fact that the Church of Christ is composed of imperfect people, who confess their imperfections, but unite in their faith in Christ as one who saves us from our sins. Paul has given us a statement in his letter to the Philippians which is one of the most helpful in the Scriptures on this point.

In Philippians iii. 12-14 Paul speaks of striving to apprehend that for which also he is apprehended of Christ. This verb means to "lay hold upon," and Paul says he is striving to lay hold upon that for which Christ has laid hold upon him—that is, eternal life. Now the noun of this verb is the word "apprentice," and Paul asserts that the Christian is an apprentice. The spirit of the whole passage breathes this thought. But think what this means. The apprentice does not hesitate to begin his apprenticeship because he fears he may make mistakes, or because he does not understand the work fully. He knows he is certain to make mistakes, but he also knows the best way to overcome them is to begin at once. For his hope is in his master, who is ever ready to help him, to encourage, and correct and guide. His hope is in himself only as he is faithful in earnest obedience to his master. Thus he will surely become masterful some day. Just so is it with the Christian. His apprenticeship is under Christ as Master, trusting and obeying whom he comes to be more masterful day by day.

Prayer.—Dear Master, help me to serve and obey in trust and confidence. Help me to overcome more and more unto the final victory.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

SIXTH DAY: *Those Who Only Need the Persuading Word.*

A pastor noted that his sermon seemed to be having a manifest effect upon a gentleman who had a pew for years in the Church, but who was not a communicant. Acting on the prompting of the Spirit, he went straight to that man at the close of the service and said: "Mr. —, I desire to have a talk with you about this matter. I have felt that both you and your wife are Christians at heart, and that you ought to confess Christ openly and come into the communion of His people." "We will be glad to talk with you," was the hearty reply. An appointment was fixed for the following Tuesday evening. When the pastor arrived he was informed that these friends had been considering the matter earnestly, and had decided to confess Christ and unite with the Church. (Ps. cvii. 2.)

Here were two secret believers, intelligent and cultured people, regular in attendance at the house of God, with their children in the Sunday-school. Yet they had not confessed Christ, simply because no pressure had been brought to bear personally upon them. The message from the pulpit did not suffice to stir them up from the inertia of indecision. They had no doubts. Yet they would probably have gone on in this lethargy had not one little word roused them into a positive Christianity. Soon they were different people. Their children were baptized. Their interest was intensified. Their spiritual life was deepened and began to bear its fruit, and continues to do so. There are many such people, strange as the fact may seem. The duty to emphasize in this connection is that of the Christian to accept every opportunity offered to speak to those whom they have reason to believe to be Christians at heart, and who only need the persuading word. How suggestive is Paul's word, "we persuade men." (2 Cor. v. 9-20.)

Prayer.—Forbid that any should lose the joy of Thy service, O Lord, because of my failure to speak to them.

STUDY XVI—Secret Believers.

SEVENTH DAY: *Suggestions for the Class.*

As we realize our own weaknesses as professing Christians let us learn to be quick to sympathize with those who are also weak. Instead of having a spirit of condemnation, let us realize that we are just a little further along in the way of life than they, especially as we may remember how we also hesitated. Moreover, let us prove by the character of our Christian life that a public confession really amounts to something.

1. What explanation is given by the evangelist John of the fact that secret believers in his day did not confess Christ? Do you think this same reason obtains to-day? If so, why do you think so? What Scripture points to the public confession as according to the will of God? What is the full duty of a witness?

2. What must we say of the complacency with which many Christians admit that public confession is not necessary? Repeat the words of Christ regarding those who confess Him. Did He mean it?

3. What misapprehension do many have about conversion? How does Christ describe the nature of the Kingdom? What is the illustration in the quotation? What Scripture shows Christ's readiness to receive?

4. What two things should every Christian purpose to do if his companions are not Christians? What alternative remains for him? What is the teaching of Christ about forsaking dear ones for Him? If we be complacent in silence among non-Christians, what is our danger?

5. What must we say to those who hesitate to confess Christ because of their inconsistencies? What is the thought about the apprentice?

6. Describe the incident mentioned regarding the attendants at Church who had not confessed Christ. What special lesson is here suggested for the Christian? Why did Paul "persuade men"?

Prayer.—Give me the spirit of hearty, open allegiance to Thee, dear Lord, and help me to influence others to give a like thorough-going fidelity to Thee before all men.

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